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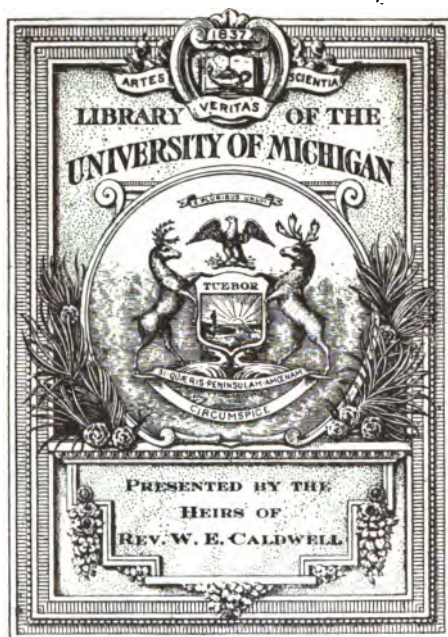
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No. 1091

W. E. Caldwell.
1876.



POLEMICAL
AND OTHER
MISCELLANIES.

Consisting of

ARTICLES ORIGINALLY INSERTED IN THE
LONDON ECLECTIC REVIEW.

AND

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

From the Seventh London Edition.

BY ROBERT HALL, M. A.
OF LEICESTER, ENG.

Boston :
PUBLISHED BY JAMES LORING,
133 WASHINGTON STREET.

1827.

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6333
H187

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Heirs of Rev.
W.F. Caldwell
10-23-43

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REVIEW.

ESSAYS, in a Series of Letters, on the following Subjects; On a Man's writing Memoirs of Himself; On Decision of Character; On the Application of the Epithet Romantic; On some of the Causes by which Evangelical Religion has been rendered less acceptable to Persons of cultivated Taste. By JOHN FOSTER. 2 vols. 12mo. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. 458. *Seventh Edition.*

THE authors who have written on human nature, may be properly distinguished into two classes, the metaphysical and the popular. The former contemplate man in the abstract; and neglecting the different shades of character and peculiarities of temper by which mankind are diversified, confine their attention to those fundamental principles which pervade the whole species. In attempting to explore the secrets of mental organization, they assume nothing more for a basis than a mere susceptibility of impression, whence they labour to deduce the multiplied powers of the human mind. The light in which they choose to consider man in their researches, is not that of a being possessed already of the exercise of reason, and agitated by various sentiments and passions, but simply as capable of acquiring them; and their object is, by an accurate investigation of the laws which regulate the connexion of the mind

with the external Universe, to discover in what manner they are actually acquired. They endeavour to trace back every mental appearance to its source. Considering the powers and principles of the mind as a complicated piece of machinery, they attempt to discover the *primum mobile*, or, in other words, that primary law, that ultimate fact, which is sufficiently comprehensive to account for every other movement. This attention to the internal operations of the mind, with a view to analyse its principles, is one of the distinctions of modern times. Among the ancients, scarcely any thing of this sort was known. Comprehensive theories, and subtile disquisitions, are not unfrequent in their writings; but they are chiefly employed for the illustration of different modes of virtue, and the establishment of different ideas of the supreme good. Their most abstracted speculations had almost always a practical tendency. The schoolmen, indeed, were deeply immersed in metaphysical speculations. They fatigued their readers in the pursuit of endless abstractions and distinctions; but the design, even of these writers, seems rather to have been accurately to arrange and define the objects of thought, than to explore the mental faculties themselves. The nature of particular and universal ideas, time, space, infinity, together with the mode of existence to be ascribed to the Supreme Being, chiefly engaged the attention of the mightiest minds in the middle ages. Acute in the highest degree, and endowed with a wonderful patience of thinking, they yet, by a mistaken direction of their powers, wasted themselves in endless logomachies, and displayed more of a teasing subtilty than of philosophical depth. They chose rather to strike into the dark and intricate by-paths of metaphysical science than to pursue a career of useful discovery: and as their disquisitions were neither adorned by taste, nor reared on a basis of ex-

tensive knowledge, they gradually fell into neglect, when juster views in philosophy made their appearance. Still they will remain a mighty monument of the utmost which the mind of man can accomplish in the field of abstraction. If the metaphysician does not find in the schoolmen the materials of his work, he will perceive the study of their writings to be of excellent benefit in sharpening his tools. They will aid his acuteness, though they may fail to enlarge his knowledge.

When the inductive and experimental philosophy, recommended by Bacon, had, in the hands of Boyle and Newton, led to such brilliant discoveries in the investigation of matter, an attempt was soon made to transfer the same method of proceeding to the mind. Hobbès, a man justly infamous for his impiety, but of extraordinary penetration, first set the example ; which was not long after followed by Locke, who was more indebted to his predecessor than he had the candour to acknowledge. His celebrated Essay has been generally considered as the established code of metaphysics. The opinions and discoveries of this great man have since been enriched by large accessions, and, on some points, corrected and amended by the labours of Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and a multitude of other writers. Still there seems to be a principle of mortality inherent in metaphysical science, which sooner or later impairs the reputation of its most distinguished adepts. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that there has never been a reputation of this kind, which has continued with undiminished lustre, through the revolutions of a century. The fame of Locke is visibly on the decline ; the speculations of Malebranche are scarcely heard of in France ; and Kant, the greatest metaphysical name on the Continent, sways a doubtful sceptre amidst a host of opponents. It is not our intention to inquire at large into the reason of the transitory fame.

acquired by this class of writers. Whether it be that the science itself rests on a precarious foundation; that its discoveries can never be brought to a decisive test; that it is too remote from the business of life to be generally interesting; that it does not compensate by its use, for its defects in the fascinations of pleasure; and that it is not like the intricacies of law, interwoven with the institutions of society; the fact itself is unquestionable. He who aspires to a reputation, that shall survive the vicissitudes of opinion and of time, must think of some other character than that of a metaphysician.

Grand and imposing in its appearance, it seems to lay claim to universal empire, and to supply the measures and the criteria of all other knowledge; but it resembles in its progress the conquests of a Sesostria, and a Bacchus, who overran kingdoms and provinces with ease, but made no permanent settlements, and soon left no trace of their achievements.

The case is very different with the popular writers, who, without attempting to form a theory, or to trace to their first elements, the vast assemblage of passions and principles which enter into the composition of man, are satisfied with describing him as he is. These writers exhibit characters, paint manners, and display human nature in those natural and affecting lights under which it will always appear to the eye of an acute and feeling observer. Without staying to inquire why it is that men think, feel, reason, remember, are attracted by some objects, or repelled by others, they take them as they are, and delineate the infinitely various modifications and appearances assumed by our essential nature. From the general mass of human passions and manners, they detach such portions as they suppose will admit of the most beautiful illustrations, or afford the most instructive lessons. Next to a habit of self

reflection, accompanied with an attentive survey of real life, writers of this kind are the best guides in the acquisition of that most important branch of knowledge, an acquaintance with mankind. As they profess to consider human nature under some particular aspect, their views are necessarily more limited than those of metaphysical writers ; but if they are less extensive they are more certain ; if they occupy less ground they cultivate it better. In the language of Bacon, "they come home to men's business and bosom." As they aim at the delineation of living nature, they can never deviate far from truth and reality, without becoming ridiculous ; while, for the fidelity of their representations, they appeal to the common sense of mankind, the dictates of which they do little more than embody and adorn. The system of Locke, or of Hartley, it is possible to conceive, may be exploded by the prevalence of a different theory ; but it is absurd to suppose, that the remarks on life and manners, contained in the writings of Addison, or of Johnson, can ever be discredited by a future moralist. In the formation of a theory, more especially in matters so subtle and complicated as those which relate to the mind, the sources of error are various. When a chain of reasoning consists of many links, a failure of connexion in any part will produce a mass of error in the result, proportioned to the length to which it is extended. In a complicated combination, if the enumeration of particulars in the outset is not complete, the mistake is progressive and incurable. In the ideal philosophy of Locke, for example, if the sources of sensation are not sufficiently explored, or if there be, as some of the profoundest thinkers have suspected, other sources of ideas than those of sensation, the greater part of his system falls to the ground. The popular writers, of whom we have been speaking, are not exposed to such dangers. It is pos-

sible, indeed, that many particular views may be erroneous; but as their attention is continually turned to living nature, provided they be possessed of competent talents, their general delineations cannot fail of being distinguished by fidelity and truth. While a few speculative men amuse themselves with discussing the comparative merits of different metaphysical systems, these are the writers, whose sentiments, conveyed through innumerable channels, form the spirit of the age; nor is it to be doubted, that the Spectator and the Rambler have imparted a stronger impulse to the public mind than all the metaphysical systems in the world. On this account we are highly gratified when we meet with a writer, who, to a vein of profound and original thought, together with just views of religion and of morals, joins the talent of recommending his ideas by the graces of imagination, and the powers of eloquence. Such a writer we have the happiness of reviewing at present. Mr. Foster's name is probably new to most of our readers; but if we may judge from the production before us, he cannot long be concealed from the notice and applause of the literary world. In an age of mediocrity, when the writing of books has become almost a mechanical art, and a familiar acquaintance with the best models has diffused taste, and diminished genius, it is impossible to peruse an author who displays so great original powers without a degree of surprise. We are ready to inquire by what peculiar felicity he was enabled to desert the trammels of custom, to break the spell by which others feel themselves bound, and to maintain a career so perfectly uncontrolled and independent. A cast of thought original and sublime, an unlimited command of imagery, a style varied, vigorous, and bold, are some of the distinguishing features of these very singular Essays. We add, with peculiar satisfaction, that they breathe the spirit of piety and be-

nevelence, and bear the most evident indications of a heart deeply attached to scriptural truths. Though Mr. F. has thought fit to give to his work the title of "*Essays in a Series of Letters*," the reader must not expect any thing in the epistolary style. They were written, the author informs us, in letters to a friend, but with a view to publication; and in their distinct development of a subject, and fulness of illustration, they resemble regular dissertations, rather than familiar epistles. We could have wished, indeed, that he had suppressed the title of *Letters*, as it may excite in the reader an expectation of colloquial ease and grace, which will not be gratified in the perusal. A little attention to this circumstance, though it might have impaired the regularity of their method, would have rendered them more fascinating. The subjects appear to us well chosen, sufficiently uncommon to afford scope for original remarks, and important enough to call forth the exertions of the strongest powers. They are the following: 1. On a man's writing memoirs of himself: 2. On decision of character: 3. On the application of the epithet Romantic: 4. On some of the causes by which evangelical religion has been rendered less acceptable to persons of cultivated taste.

We shall endeavour to give our readers an idea of the general design of each of these essays; and to enable them, by a few extracts, to judge of the manner in which that design is executed.

In the first essay, the author expatiates at large on the influence of external events in the formation of character. This influence he traces to four sources, instruction, companionship, reading, and attention to the state and manners of mankind.

Among the many objects calculated to form the character and impress the heart, Mr. F. enumerates natural scenery; at the same time deploring that want

of fancy and sensibility, which often renders it productive of so little effect. The passage in which he adverts to this subject, is so beautiful, that we cannot prevail on ourselves to withhold it from the reader. He will see at once that the writer has viewed nature with the eye of a poet, and has deeply imbibed the delicious enchantment which he so eloquently describes.

'It might be supposed that the scenes of nature, an amazing assemblage of phenomena, if their effect were not lost through familiarity, would have a powerful influence on all opening minds, and transfuse into the internal economy of ideas and sentiment something of a character and a colour correspondent to the beauty, vicissitude, and grandeur which continually press on the senses. On minds of genius they often have this effect; and Beattie's *Minstrel* may be as just as it is a fascinating description of such a spirit. But on the greatest number this influence operates feebly; you will not see the process in children, nor the result in mature persons. The charms of nature are objects only of sight and hearing, not of sensibility and imagination; and even the sight and hearing do not receive impressions sufficiently distinct or forcible for clear recollection; it is not, therefore, strange that these impressions seldom go so much deeper than the senses as to awaken pensiveness or enthusiasm, and fill the mind with an interior permanent scenery of beautiful images at its own command. This defect of fancy and sensibility is unfortunate amidst a creation infinitely rich with grand and beautiful objects, which, imparting something more than images to a mind adapted and habituated to converse with nature, inspire an exquisite sentiment that seems like the emanation of a spirit residing in them. It is unfortunate, I have thought within these few minutes, while looking out on one of the most enchanting nights of the most interesting season of the year, and hearing the voices of a company of persons, to whom I can perceive that this soft and solemn shade over the earth, the calm sky, the beautiful stripes of cloud, the stars, and waning moon just risen, are things not in the least more interesting than the walls, ceiling, and candle-light of a room.' Vol. I. pp. 26, 27. Pp. 22, 23. *Seventh Edition*.

Toward the close of the essay, in tracing the steps by which some have arrived at the last stage of daring impiety, the denial of a God, the author evinces in a masterly manner the presumption of the atheist, and places the extreme absurdity of pretending to demonstrate the non-existence of a Deity, in a light in which

we do not remember to have seen it exhibited. Speaking of a pretended heroism attached to atheistic impiety, he adds,

'But, indeed, it is heroism no longer, if he *knows* that there is no God. The wonder then turns on the great process by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that can know that there is no God. What ages, and what lights are requisite for *THIS* attainment? This intelligence involves the very attributes of divinity, while a God is denied. For, unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot, with certainty, assign the cause of all that exists, that cause may be a God. If he does not know every thing that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is precludes another Deity by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist. But he must know that he does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the temerity with which he firmly avows his rejection, and acts accordingly.' Vol. I. pp. 60—62. Pp. 43, 49. *Seventh Edition.*

The next essay, On decision of character, appears to us superior to the former. The subject is pursued with greater regularity, the conceptions are more profound, and the style is more chaste and classical. After placing in strong contrast the features of a decisive and of an irresolute character, he proceeds to analyse the elements of which the former is composed. Among these, he assigns the first place to a firm confidence in our own judgment; which, he justly observes, notwithstanding the general disposition of mankind to overrate their powers, is no common attainment. With those who are most disposed to think highly of their own abilities, it is common, when they arrive at the moment of action, to distrust their judgment; and, as

the author beautifully expresses it, "their mind seems all at once placed in a misty vacuity, where it reaches round on all sides, and finds nothing to lay hold of." The next ingredient essential to decision of character, is a state of cogent feeling, an intense ardour of mind, precluding indifference and delay.

In addition to these qualities, courage is required, without which, it is obvious that resolutions the most maturely formed, are liable to vanish at the first breath of opposition. In the remaining part of the essay, Mr. F. illustrates the influence of several circumstances of an external nature which tend to form or to augment the quality of which he has been treating. The principal of these are *opposition*, *desertion*, and *success*. It would prolong this article too much, to attempt to follow the author in these particulars. Suffice it to remark, that under each of them will be found many just and important observations. He concludes with briefly recommending a discipline conducive to the attainment of a decisive character. He particularly insists on the propriety of inuring the mind to a habit of reasoning; and that, not in a superficial and desultory manner, but by steadily following the train till we reach a legitimate conclusion.

We cannot dismiss this part of the work, without presenting our readers with an extract from the character of Howard, whose virtues have been emblazoned by the gorgeous eloquence of Burke; but we are mistaken if they have ever been painted in a more masterly manner than in the following portrait.

'In this distinction (*decision*) no man ever exceeded, for instance, or ever will exceed, the late illustrious Howard. The energy of his determination was so great, that if, instead of being habitual, it had been shown only for a short time, on particular occasions, it would have appeared a vehement impetuosity; but by being unintermitted it had an equability of manner, which scarcely appeared to exceed the tone of a calm constancy, it was so totally the re-

verse of any thing like turbulence or agitation. It was the calmness of an intensity, kept uniform by the nature of the human mind forbidding it to be more, and by the character of the individual forbidding it to be less. The habitual passion of his mind was a measure of feeling almost equal to the temporary extremes and paroxysms of common minds : as a great river, in its customary state, is equal to a small or moderate one, when swollen to a torrent. The moment of finishing his plans in deliberation, and commencing them in action, was the same. I wonder what must have been the amount of that bribe, in emolument or pleasure, that would have detained him a week inactive after their final adjustment. The law which carries water down a declivity was not more unconquerable and invariable, than the determination of his feelings toward the main object. The importance of this object held his faculties in a state of excitement which was too rigid to be affected by lighter interests, and on which, therefore, the beauties of nature and of art had no power. He had no leisure feeling which he could spare, to be diverted among the innumerable varieties of the extensive scene which he traversed ; all his subordinate feelings lost their separate existence and operation, by falling into the grand one. There have not been wanting trivial minds to mark this as a fault in his character. But the mere men of taste ought to be silent respecting such a man as Howard ; he is above their sphere of judgment. The invisible spirits, who fulfil their commission of philanthropy among mortals, do not care about pictures, statues, and sumptuous buildings ; and no more did he, when the time in which he must have inspected and admired them would have been taken from the work to which he had consecrated his life.* The curiosity which he might feel, was reduced to wait till the hour should arrive when its gratification should be presented by conscience, which kept a scrupulous charge of all his time, as the most sacred duty of that hour. If he was still at every hour, when it came, fated to feel the attractions of the fine arts but the second claim, they might be sure of their revenge, for no other man will ever visit Rome under such a despotic consciousness of duty, as to refuse himself time for surveying the magnificence of its ruins. Such a sin against taste is very far beyond the reach of common saintship to commit. It implied an inconceivable severity of conviction, that he had *one thing to do* ; and that he, who would do some great thing in this short life, must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces, as, to idle spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, looks like insanity. His attention was so strongly and tenaciously fixed on his object, that, even at the greatest distance, as the Egyptian pyramids to travellers, it appeared to him with a luminous distinctness as if it were nigh, and beguiled the toilsome length of labour and enterprise by which he was to reach it. It was so conspicuous before him, that not a step deviated from the

* Mr. Howard, however, was not destitute of taste for the fine arts. His house at Cardington was better filled with paintings and drawings, than any other, on a small scale, that we ever saw.—*Rev.*

direction, and every movement and every day was an approximation. As his method referred every thing he did and thought to the end, and as his exertion did not relax for a moment, he made the trial, so seldom made—what is the utmost effect which may be granted to the last possible efforts of a human agent; and therefore, what he did not accomplish, he might conclude to be placed beyond the sphere of mortal activity, and calmly leave to the immediate disposal of Providence. pp. 156—160. Pp. 125—128. *Seventh Edition.*

We have one remark to make, before we conclude our review of this essay. We are a little apprehensive, that the glowing colours in which the imagination of Mr. F. has painted an unyielding constancy of mind, may tend to seduce some of his readers into an intemperate admiration of that quality, without duly distinguishing the object to which it is directed, and the motives by which it is sustained. We give our author full credit for the purity of his principles; we are firmly persuaded that he is not to be classed among the impious idolaters of mental energy. But we could wish that he had more fully admonished his readers to regard resolution of character, not as a virtue so much as a means of virtue, a mere instrument that owes its value entirely to the purpose to which it is employed; and that wherever nature has conferred it, an additional obligation is imposed of purifying the principles and regulating the heart. It might at first view, be thought impossible, as Mr. F. intimates, that men should be found, who are as resolute in the prosecution of criminal enterprises, as they could be supposed to be in the pursuit of the most virtuous objects. It is surely a melancholy proof of something wrong in the constitution of human nature, that a quality so important as that of energetic decision, is so little under the regulation of principle; that constancy is so much more frequently to be seen in what is wrong than in what is right; and, in fine, that the *world* can boast so many more heroes than the *church*.

In the third essay, *On the application of the epithet Romantic*, Mr. Foster takes occasion to expose the eagerness with which terms of censure are adopted by men, who, instead of calmly weighing the merits of an undertaking, or a character, think it sufficient to express their antipathy by some opprobrious appellation. The epithet *romantic*, holds a distinguished place in the vocabulary of contempt. If a scheme of action, which it requires much benevolence to conceive, and much vigour to execute, be proposed, by many it will be thought completely exploded when they have branded it with the appellation of *romantic*. Thus selfishness and indolence, arraying themselves in the garb of wisdom, assume the pride of superiority, when they ought to feel the humiliation of guilt. To imitate the highest examples, to do good in ways not usual in the same rank of life, to make great exertions and sacrifices in the cause of religion and with a view to eternal happiness, to determine without delay to reduce to practice whatever we applaud in theory, are modes of conduct which the world will generally condemn as *romantic*, but which this author shows to be founded on the highest reason. In unfolding the true idea of the *romantic*, as applicable to a train of sentiments, or course of conduct, he ascribes whatever may be justly so denominated, to the predominance of the imagination over the other powers. He points out the symptoms of this disease, as apparent—in the expectation of a peculiar destiny, while the fancy paints to itself scenes of unexampled felicity—in overlooking the relation which subsists between ends and means—in counting upon casualties instead of contemplating the stated order of events,—and in hoping to realise the most momentous projects, without any means at all, or by means totally inadequate to the effect. Some of the illustrations which the author introduces on this part of his subject, are

peculiarly happy. We are delighted to find him treating with poignant ridicule, those superficial pretenders, who, without disavowing any dependence on divine agency, hope to reform the world, and to bring back a paradisaical state, by the mere force of moral instruction. For the prospect of the general prevalence of virtue and happiness, we are indebted to revelation. We have no reason to suppose the minds of our modern infidels sufficiently elevated to have thought of the cessation of wars, and the universal diffusion of peace and love, but for the information which they have obtained from the scriptures. From these, they derived the doctrine of a millenium ; and they have received it as they have done every thing else, only to corrupt it : for, exploding all the means by which the scriptures have taught us to expect the completion of this event, they rely merely on the resources of reason and philosophy. They impiously deek themselves with the spoils of Revelation, and take occasion from the hopes and prospects which she alone supplies, to deride her assistance, and to idolize the powers of human nature. That Being, who planted Christianity by miraculous interposition, and by the effusion of his Spirit produced such effects in the hearts of millions as afford a specimen and a pledge of an entire renovation, has also assured us, that violence and injustice shall cease, and that *none shall hurt, or destroy in all his holy mountain, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God.* But, it seems, revelation is to have no concern in this work ; philosophy is to effect every thing ; and we are to look to the Political Justice of Godwin, and the Moral Code of Volney, for that which Christians were so weak as to expect at the hand of Deity !

The conclusion which our author draws from the insufficiency of mere human agency, to effect that great

renovation in the character and condition of men which Revelation teaches us to expect, is most just and consolatory. We should have been happy to transcribe the passage ; but lest we should exceed our limits, we refer our readers to Vol. II. pp. 87, 88. Pp. 244—247. *Seventh Edition.*

The last essay in these volumes, attempts to assign *some of the causes that have rendered evangelical religion less acceptable to persons of cultivated taste.* This essay is the most elaborate. Aware of the delicacy and difficulty of his subject, the author seems to have summoned all the powers of his mind, to enable him to grasp it in all its extent, and to present it in all its force and beauty. This essay is itself sufficient, in our opinion, to procure the author a brilliant and lasting reputation.

It is proper to remind our readers, that in tracing the causes which have tended to produce in men of taste an aversion to evangelical religion, Mr. F. avowedly confines himself to those which are of a *subordinate* class, while he fully admits the *primary cause* to be that *inherent corruption* of nature, which renders men strongly indisposed to any communication from Heaven. We could, however, have wished that he had insisted on this more largely. The scriptures ascribe the rejection of the gospel to one general principle ; *the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The peculiar doctrines of Christianity are distinguished by a spirit irreconcilably at variance with that of the world. The deep repentance it enjoins, strikes at the pride and levity of the human heart. The mystery of an incarnate and crucified Saviour, must necessarily confound the reason, and shock the prejudices, of a mind which will admit nothing that it cannot perfectly reduce to the principles of philosophy.

The whole tenor of the life of Christ, the objects he pursued, and the profound humiliation he exhibited, must convict of madness and folly the favourite pursuits of mankind. The virtues usually practised in society, and the models of excellence most admired there, are so remote from that holiness which is enjoined in the New Testament, that it is impossible for a taste which is formed on the one, to perceive the charms of the other. The happiness which it proposes in an union with God, and a participation of the image of Christ, is so far from being congenial to the inclinations of worldly men, that it can scarcely be mentioned without exciting their ridicule and scorn. General speculations on the Deity have much to amuse the mind, and to gratify that appetite for the wonderful, which thoughtful and speculative men are delighted to indulge. Religion, viewed in this light, appears more in the form of an exercise to the understanding, than a law to the heart. Here the soul expatiates at large, without feeling itself controlled or alarmed. But when evangelical truths are presented, they bring God so near, if we may be allowed the expression, and speak with so commanding a voice to the conscience, that they leave no alternative, but that of submissive acquiescence or proud revolt. As men of taste are, for the most part, men of the world, not at all distinguished from others by a greater familiarity with religious ideas, these observations are applicable to them in their utmost extent.

Though we thought it right to suggest these hints, we wish not to be understood to convey any censure on Mr. F. for confining his attention principally to other topics. In discussing more fully and profoundly, some of the subordinate causes, which have come in aid of the primary one, to render men of cultivated taste averse to evangelical piety, we think he has rendered an important service to the public.

The first cause he assigns is, that of its being the religion of many weak and uncultivated minds; in consequence of which it becomes inseparably associated, in the conceptions of many, with the intellectual poverty of its disciples, so as to wear a mean and degraded aspect. We regret that we cannot follow the author in his illustration of this topic. We must be content with observing, that he has exposed the weakness of this prejudice in a most masterly and triumphant manner.

The second cause which the author assigns, as having had, in his opinion, a considerable influence in prejudicing elegant and cultivated minds against evangelical piety, is the peculiarity of language adopted in the discourses and books of its teachers, the want of a more classical form of diction, and the profusion of words and phrases which are of a technical and systematical cast.

We are inclined to think, with Mr. F. that the cause of religion has suffered considerably from the circumstance here mentioned. The superabundance of phrases, appropriated by some pious authors to the subject of religion, and never applied to any other purpose, has not only the effect of disgusting persons of taste, but of obscuring religion itself. As they are seldom defined, and never exchanged for equivalent words, they pass current without being understood. They are not the vehicle, they are the substitute of thought. Among a certain description of Christians, they become, by degrees, to be regarded with a mystic awe; inso-much, that if a writer expressed the very same ideas in different phrases, he would be condemned as a heretic. To quit the magical circle of words in which many Christians suffer themselves to be confined, excites as great a clamour as the boldest innovation in sentiment. Controversies which have been agitated with much warmth, might often have been amicably

adjusted, or even finally decided, could the respective partisans have been prevailed on to lay aside their predilection for phrases, and honestly resolve to examine their real import. In defiance of the dictates of candour and good sense, these have been obstinately retained; and have usually been the refuge of ignorance, the apple of discord, and the watch-words of religious hostility. In some instances, the evil which we lament, has sprung from a more amiable cause. The force and solemnity of devotional feelings are such, that they seem to consecrate every thing with which they have been connected; and as the bulk of pious people have received their religious impressions from teachers more distinguished for their simplicity and zeal than for comprehension of mind and copiousness of language, they learn to annex an idea of sanctity to that set of phrases with which they have been most familiar. These become the current language of religion, to which subsequent writers conform, partly perhaps from indolence, and partly from the fear of offending their brethren.

To these causes, we may add, the contentious and sectarian spirit of modern times, which has taught the different parties of Christians to look on one another with an unnatural horror, to apprehend contamination from the very phrases employed by each other, and to invent each for itself a dialect as parrow and exclusive as their whimsical singularities. But, while we concur, in the main, with Mr. F. on this subject, we are disposed to think that he has carried his representations too far, both with respect to the magnitude of the abuse itself, and the probable advantages which would ensue on its removal. The repugnance of the human mind, in its unenlightened state, to the peculiarities of the Christian doctrine, is such, that we have little hope of its yielding to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Till it is touched and humbled by grace,

we are apprehensive that it will retain its aversion, and not suffer itself to be cheated into an approbation of the gospel by any artifice of words. Exhibit evangelical religion in what colours you will, the worldly-minded and the careless will shrink from the obtrusion of unwelcome ideas. Cowper has become, in spite of his religion, a popular poet, but his success has not been such as to make religion popular ; nor have the gigantic genius and fame of Milton shielded from the ridicule and contempt of his admirers, that system of religion which he beheld with awful adoration.

In treating subjects properly theological, we apprehend, great caution should be used, not to deviate wantonly and unnecessarily from the phraseology of scripture. The apostle tells us, that in preaching the gospel, he did not use the enticing words of man's wisdom, but such words as the Holy Ghost taught him. We do not, indeed, contend, that in the choice of *every* particular word, or phrase, he was immediately inspired ; but we think it reasonable to believe, that the unction which was on his heart, and the perfect illumination that he possessed, led him to employ such terms in the statement of the mysteries of Christianity, as were better adapted than any other, to convey their real import ; which we are the more inclined to conclude, from observing the sameness of phraseology which pervades the writings of the apostles, when they are treating on the same subject. As the truths which the revelation of the New Testament unfolds, are perfectly original, and transcendently important, it might naturally be expected, that the communication of them would give birth to an original cast of phraseology, or in other words, a steady adherence to certain terms, in order to render the ideas which they conveyed, fixed, precise, and unchangeable.

Infirmities?

In teaching the principles of every science, it is found

necessary, to select or invent terms, which though originally of a laxer signification, are afterwards restricted and confined to *one peculiar modification of thought*, and constitute the technical language of that science. Such terms are always capable of being defined; (for mere words convey nothing to the mind;) but to substitute a definition in their place, would be tedious circumlocution; and to exchange the term itself for a different one, would frequently lead to dangerous mistakes.

In the original elementary parts of a language, there are in truth few, or no synonymes; for what should prompt men, in the early period of literature, to invent a word, that neither conveyed any new idea, nor enabled them to present an old one with more force and precision. In the progress of refinement, indeed, regard to copiousness and harmony, has enriched language with many exotics, which are merely those words in a foreign language that perfectly correspond to terms in our own; as *felicity* for *happiness*, *celestial* for *heavenly*, and a multitude of others. Since, then, the nature of language is such, that no two terms are exactly of the same force and import, (except in the case last mentioned,) we cannot but apprehend that dangerous consequences would result from a studied attempt to vary from the standard phraseology, where the statement of doctrines is concerned; and that by changing the terms, the ideas themselves might be changed or mutilated. In teaching a religion designed for the use and benefit of all mankind, it is certainly desirable that the technical words, the words employed in a peculiar and appropriate sense, should be few; but to fix and perpetuate the ideas, and to preserve *the faith once delivered to the saints* from the caprices of fancy, and the dangers of innovation, it seems necessary that there should be some. We are inclined to think that in inculcating Christian morality, and in appeals

and addresses to the heart, a much greater latitude may be safely indulged, than in the statement of *peculiar doctrines*; and that a more bold and varied diction, with a wider range of illustration and allusion than is usually employed, would often be attended with the happiest effect. Mr. Foster has given in many parts of these volumes, beautiful specimens of what we intend.

With respect to the copious use of scripture language, which Mr. F. condemns, (in our opinion with too much severity,) as giving an uncouth and barbarous air to theological books, we prefer a middle course; without applauding the excess to which it is carried by many pious writers, on the one hand; or wishing it to be kept so entirely apart as Mr. F. contends, on the other. To say nothing of the inimitable beauties of the Bible, considered in a literary view, which are universally acknowledged; it is the book which every devout man is accustomed to consult as the oracle of God; it is the companion of his best moments, and the vehicle of his strongest consolations. Intimately associated in his mind with every thing dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other; and when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a religious discourse, which nothing else can supply. Besides, is there not room to apprehend, that a studied avoidance of the scripture phraseology, and a care to express all that it is supposed to contain in the forms of classical diction, might ultimately lead to a neglect of the scriptures themselves, and a habit of substituting flashy and superficial declamation, in the room of the saving truths of the gospel? Such an apprehension is but too much verified by the most celebrated sermons of the French; and still more by some modern compositions in our own language, which usurp that title. For devotional impression, we conceive that a very considerable tincture of the language of

scripture, or at least such a colouring as shall discover an intimate acquaintance with those inimitable models, will generally succeed best.

It is impossible to establish an universal rule, since different methods are equally adapted to different purposes ; and therefore we are willing to allow with Mr. F. that where the fashionable and the gay are addressed, and the prejudices arising from a false refinement are to be conciliated, whatever in the diction might repel by an appearance of singularity, should be carefully shunned. Accordingly, we equally admire, in the *Rise and Progress of Religion*, by Dr. Doddridge, and in the *Rural Philosophy* of Mr. Bates, the dexterity with which these excellent writers have suited their composition to their respective classes of readers. On the whole, let it once for all be remembered, that men of taste form a very small part of the community, of no greater consequence in the eyes of their Creator than others ; that the end of all religious discourse is the salvation of souls ; and that to a mind which justly estimates the weight of eternal things, it will appear a greater honour to have converted a sinner from the error of his way, than to have wielded the thunder of a Demosthenes, or to have kindled the flame of a Cicero.

We hasten to close this article, by making a few observations on the last cause which our author has assigned, for the general distaste that persons of polite and elegant attainments usually discover toward evangelical religion. This is, the neglect and contempt with which it has been almost constantly treated by our fine writers, of whose delinquency, in this respect, the author takes a wide and extensive survey, exposing their criminality with a force of eloquence that has perhaps never before been exerted on this subject. Though his attention is chiefly directed to the influence of modern literature, yet as the writings of the an-

cients, and especially of the poets, have had a powerful operation in forming the taste and sentiments of succeeding generations, he has extended his notice to these, and has made some most striking animadversions on the ancient authors of the epopea, and particularly on Homer.

We must do justice to his intrepidity in venturing to attack the idol of all classical scholars : nor can he have failed to foresee the manner in which it will be attempted to be repelled. They will remind him, that the lawfulness of defensive war has seldom been called in question ; that the one in which Homer's heroes were engaged, was not only just but meritorious, being undertaken to avenge a most signal affront and injury ; that no subject could be more suited to the epic muse, either on account of its magnitude, or the deep interest it excited ; that having chosen it, the poet is to be commended for throwing into it all the fire of which it was susceptible ; that to cherish in the breasts of youth a gallant and warlike spirit, is the surest defence of nations ; and that this spirit, under proper regulations, constitutes that *superbia* which Plato extols so highly in his republic, as the basis of a manly, heroic character. This, and much more than this, will be said : but when our Grecians have spent all their arrows, it will still remain an incontestable fact, that an enthusiastic admiration of the Iliad of Homer, is but a bad preparation for relishing the beauties of the New Testament. What then is to be done ? Shall we abandon the classics, and devote ourselves solely to the perusal of modern writers, where the maxims inculcated, and the principles taught, are little, if at all, more in unison with those of Christianity ?—a fact, which Mr. F. acknowledges and deplores. While things continue as they are, we are apprehensive, therefore, that we should gain nothing by neglecting the unrivalled productions

of genius left us by the ancients, but a deterioration of taste, without any improvement in religion. The evil is not to be corrected by any partial innovation of this kind. Until a more Christian spirit pervades the world, we are inclined to think that the study of the classics, is on the whole, advantageous to public morals, by inspiring an elegance of sentiment, and an elevation of soul, which we should in vain seek for elsewhere.

The total inattention of the great majority of our fine writers, to all the distinguishing features of the religion they profess, affords a most melancholy reflection. It has no doubt excited the notice of many, and has been deeply lamented; but it has never been placed in a light so serious and affecting, as in the volumes before us. In the observations which our author makes on the *Essay on Man*, we are delighted and surprised, to find at once so much philosophical truth and poetical beauty. His critique on the writings of Addison and Johnson, evinces deep penetration; and as it respects the former, is uncommonly impressive and important.

We take our leave of this work, with sincere reluctance. For the length to which we have extended our review, the subject must be our apology. It has fared with us as with a traveller who passes through an enchanting country, where he meets with so many beautiful views and so many striking objects which he is loath to quit, that he loiters till the shades of the evening insensibly fall upon him. We are far, however, from recommending these volumes as faultless. Mr. F.'s work is rather an example of the power of genius, than a specimen of finished composition: it lies open in many points to the censure of those minor critics, who by the observation of a few technical rules may easily avoid its faults, without reaching one of its beauties. The author has paid too little attention to the construction of his sentences. They are for the most

part too long, sometimes involved in perplexity, and often loaded with redundancies. They have too much of the looseness of an harangue, and too little of the compact elegance of regular composition. An occasional obscurity pervades some parts of the work. The mind of the writer seems at times to struggle with conceptions too mighty for his grasp, and to present confused masses, rather than distinct delineations of thought. This, however, is to be imputed to the originality, not the weakness of his powers. The scale on which he thinks is so vast, and the excursions of his imagination are so extended, that they frequently carry him into the most unbeaten track, and among objects where a ray of light glances in an angle only, without diffusing itself over the whole. On ordinary topics, his conceptions are luminous in the highest degree. He places the idea which he wishes to present in such a flood of light, that it is not merely visible itself, but it seems to illumine all around it. He paints metaphysics, and has the happy art of arraying what in other hands would appear cold and comfortless abstractions, in the warmest colours of fancy. Without the least affectation of frivolous ornaments, without quitting his argument in pursuit of imagery, his imagination becomes the perfect handmaid of his reason, ready at every moment to spread her canvass, and present her pencil. But what pleases us most, and affords us the highest satisfaction, is to find such talents enlisted on the side of true Christianity : nor can we help indulging a benevolent triumph at the accession of powers to the cause of evangelical piety, which its most distinguished opponents would be proud to possess.

REVIEW
OF
ZEAL WITHOUT INNOVATION.

THIRD EDITION.

PREFACE
TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE REVIEW.

It was the opinion of some sincere friends of religion, that a republication of the following strictures might have its use in certain quarters, where the literary journal in which they first appeared may possibly not have extended. The writer of these remarks has nothing in view but the promotion of Christian charity, the vindication of calumniated innocence, and the counteraction of those insidious arts, by which designing men are seeking to advance their personal interest or those of a party, at the expense of truth and justice. How far the Author here animadverted upon, falls under this description, must be left to the decision of an impartial public. If it be thought that more commendation ought to have been given, in the following strictures, to those parts of the work which are confessedly unexceptionable, the writer must be allowed to remark, that the effect of what is good in the performance is entirely defeated by the large infusion of what is of an opposite quality.

In appreciating the merits of a writer, the general tendency of his work should be principally regarded, without suffering the edge of censure to be abated by such a mixture of truth as only serves to give a safer and wider circulation to misrepresentation and falsehood.

It has been deemed a capital omission in the following critique, that no notice is taken of the Author's illiberal treatment of the Puritans. This omission arose partly from a wish to avoid prolixity, and partly from an apprehension it would lead to a discussion not perfectly relevant to the matter in hand. It would be no difficult matter to construct such a defence of the Puritans, as would leave this or any other author very little to reply; but to do justice to the subject would require a deduction of facts, and a series of arguments, quite inconsistent with the limits to which we are confined. To oppose assertion to assertion, and invective to invective, could answer no end but the reviving animosities which we should be happy to see for ever extinguished. The controversy betwixt the Puritans and their opponents, turns entirely on these two questions. Has any religious society, assuming the name of a church, a right to establish new terms of communion, distinct from those enjoined by Christ and his apostles? Admitting they have such a right, ought these terms to consist in things which the imposers acknowledge to be indifferent, and the party on whom they are enjoined look upon as sinful? Is not this a palpable violation of the apostolical injunction, *Him that is weak in faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations*? We are persuaded we speak the sentiments of some of the best men in the Church of England, when we assert, that the basis of communion was made narrower at the Reformation than is consistent with the dictates of Christian charity or sound policy, and that the Puritans were treated with a severity altogether unjustifiable.

The Author of 'Zeal without Innovation' declares himself "dissatisfied with the trite remark that there were faults on both sides, when the guilt of aggression rests so clearly on the heads of the Nonconformists." To infer their guilt as aggressors, because they were the first to complain, is begging the question at issue. Before we are entitled to criminate them on this head, it is requisite to inquire into the *justice* of their complaints. They who first discover a truth, are naturally the first to impugn the opposite error. They who find themselves aggrieved, are necessarily the first to complain. So that to attach culpability to the party which betrays the first symptoms of dissatisfaction, without farther inquiry, is to confer on speculative error, and on practical tyranny a claim to unalterable perpetuity—a doctrine well suited to the mean and slavish maxims inculcated by this writer. The learned Warburton was as little satisfied as himself with the trite remark of their being faults on both sides, but for an opposite reason. "It would be hard," he affirms, "to say who are most to blame, those who oppose established authority for things indifferent; or that authority which rigidly insists on them, and will abate nothing for the sake of tender, misinformed consciences: I say it would be hard to solve this, had not the Apostle done it for us, where he says, we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, *and not to please ourselves*. I myself, says he, do so, and all for the gospel's sake. This is the man who tells us he had fought a good fight and overcome. And we may believe him, for, in this contention, he is always the conqueror who submits."

When the question is fairly put, whether a tender conscience, admitting it to be erroneous, shall be forced, or the imposition of things confessedly indifferent be dropped, it can surely require but little sagacity to return a decisive answer. The arguments which induced

Locke to give his suffrage in favour of the Nonconformists, the reasons which prevailed on Baxter and on Howe to quit stations of usefulness in the church and doom themselves to an unprofitable inactivity, will not easily be deemed light or frivolous. The English nation has produced no men more exempt from the suspicion of weakness or caprice than these.

Desirous of composing, rather than inflaming, the dissensions which unhappily subsist among Christians, we decline entering farther on this topic ; heartily praying with the Apostle, that 'grace may be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.'

D*

REVIEW.

ZEAL WITHOUT INNOVATION: or the Present State of Religion and Morals considered; with a View to the Dispositions and Measures required for its Improvement. To which is subjoined an Address to young Clergymen, intended to guard them against some prevalent Errors.

THERE are some works which require to be viewed only in a literary light. No important principles are discussed, nor any momentous interests at stake. When this is the case, nothing more is necessary than for a reviewer to exhibit the author's plan, and to give an impartial judgment on the ability with which it is executed. If the merit of the performance be very conspicuous, it is the less necessary to multiply words in order to show it; and if it have little or none, it need not be conducted to the land of forgetfulness with the pomp of criticism. For this reason, the utility of periodical criticism may, in a literary view, be fairly questioned; as it seems like an attempt to anticipate the decision of the public, and prematurely to adjust those pretensions, which, if left to itself, it will be sure to adjust, in time, with the most perfect impartiality. A reviewer may give a momentary popularity to what deserves to be forgotten, but he can neither with-

hold nor bestow a lasting fame. Cowper, we will venture to say, is not the less admired because the Critical Review, with its usual good taste and discernment, could discover in him no traces of poetic genius.

There are other works, which owe their importance more to the subjects on which they treat, and their tendency to inflame the prejudices and strike in with the humour of the public, than to any extraordinary ability. Their infection renders them formidable. They are calculated to increase the violence of an epidemic disease. The matter of contagion ought not to be slighted on account of the meanness of the vehicle by which it is transmitted. We are sorry to be under the necessity of classing the performance before us with works of that nature; but our conviction of its deserving that character must be our apology for bestowing a degree of attention upon it, to which it is not otherwise entitled. The author's professed design is to present a view of the state of religion and morals, and to suggest such remedies as are best adapted to correct the disorders under which they languish. A more noble and important undertaking cannot be conceived. We have only to lament, that, in the pursuit of it, he betrays so many mean partialities and ungenerous prejudices, as utterly disqualify him from doing justice to the subject. While we would wish to give him credit for *some* portion of good intention, we are firmly convinced, that had *his eye been single, his whole body had been more full of light*. In an attempt to trace the causes of degeneracy in religion and morals, and to point out the proper correctives, nothing is more requisite than a large and catholic spirit, totally emancipated from the shackles of party, joined with extensive knowledge and a discriminating judgment. In the first of these qualities, the author is lamentably deficient. He looks at every thing so entirely through the medium of party,

that, though he cannot be said to be absolutely blind; he is quite incapable of seeing afar off. His remarks are often shrewd; such as indicate a mind awake, and attentive to the scenes which have passed before him. He is sometimes acute, never comprehensive; accurate in details, with little capacity for tracing the consequences, and unfolding the energy of general principles. While the title of the work leads us to expect his attention would be entirely directed to the best means of promoting the moral improvement of mankind, the watchful reader will perceive there are *subordinate objects* which he is at least equally solicitous to advance. There is a complication in his views, a *wheel within a wheel*, quite incompatible with simplicity of mind, and perfect purity of intention. There appears too much reason to regard him as an artful, bigoted partizan, acting under the disguise of a philanthropist and a reformer. Severe as this censure may seem, we are persuaded our readers will acknowledge its justice, when they are apprised of the leading statements and positions contained in this singular work.

The author sets out with descanting on the state of religion in this country, which he represents as very deplorable; in proof of this, he adduces, among other facts, the violation of the Christian Sabbath, and the prevailing neglect of public worship. As these symptoms of degeneracy are not found in an equal degree among Dissenters and Methodists, he is led, by the course of his subject, to notice the state of religion amongst them, where he acknowledges there is no room to complain of a deficiency of zeal. He does not affect to deny that their teachers exhibit the great truths of Christianity with energy and effect, and that much good has resulted from their labours. We should naturally suppose a pious man would here find ground for satisfaction; and that, however he might regret the

mixture of error with useful efforts, he would rejoice to perceive that real and important good was done any where. It is but justice to him, to let him convey his feelings on this subject in his own words.

‘From the sad state of things represented in the preceding section, many turn with pleasure to what is passing among our Separatists, whose places of worship generally exhibit a very different scene to our parish churches. Here there appears to be some life and effect. The officiating minister has not half empty pews to harangue, but a crowded auditory “hanging on his lips.” Whether, however, in what is now before us we shall find no cause of uneasiness, when all its circumstances are considered, admits of great doubt.

‘It cannot be denied, that with all the fanaticism charged on Separatists, (and it is to be feared with great truth in some instances,) many a profligate has been reclaimed, and much good in other ways has been done among the lower orders, by the labours of their ministers. From these circumstances, and the known ignorance and dissoluteness of the times, many, without the least degree of adverse intention to our established church, have in the simplicity of their hearts concurred in forwarding the endeavours of the Separatists. And hence it is, that in all the more populous parts of the country, we see that multitude of dissenting chapels, which of late years has increased, and is still increasing.

‘To some good men, free from all prejudice against the Church of England, it is matter of no regret, that the number of Separatists increase, provided there be with this circumstance an increasing regard to Christianity. With such persons, all consideration of forms, and modes of worship, is sunk in the greater importance of genuine faith and piety. But it enters not into the thoughts of such persons, that “tares may spring up with the wheat ;” and that what at present has a good effect, may operate to the production of something hereafter of a very different nature. Now such we conceive to be the nature of the case before us. We have reason to apprehend ill consequences from increasing separatism ; with whatever zeal for important truths, and with whatever success in propagating them, it be at present accompanied.

‘And first, it may be observed, that it goes to annihilation of the established church as a national institution. “The bulk of every newly-raised congregation of Separatists is composed of persons educated within the pale of the Church of England. Of these many are heads of families, or likely to become so. By commencing Dissenters, they, and their posterity, however multiplied, are broken off from the national church. These detachments from the establishment, going on as they have done of late years, must consequently increase the number of those who prefer a differently constituted church ; and these may in time amount to such a majority, as to render it again a question with those in power, whether the Church of England shall any longer have the support of the state.’ pp. 14—17.

That the increase of Dissenters, *in itself considered*, cannot be a pleasing circumstance to a conscientious Churchman, is certain; and if this is all the author means to say, he talks very idly. The true question evidently is, whether the good accruing from the labours of Dissenters is a proper subject of congratulation, *although* it may be attended with this incidental consequence, an increased separation from the Established Church. In a word, Is the promotion of genuine Christianity, or the advancement of an external communion, the object primarily to be pursued? Whatever excellence may be ascribed to our national establishment by its warmest admirers, still it is a human institution; an institution to which the first ages of the church were strangers, to which Christianity was in no degree indebted for its original success, and the merit of which must be brought to the test of utility. It is in the order of means. As an expedient devised by the wisdom of our ancestors, for promoting true religion, it is entitled to support just as far as it accomplishes its end. This end, however, is found in some instances to be accomplished by means which are of a different description. A fire, which threatens immediate destruction, is happily extinguished before it has had time to extend its ravages; but it is extinguished by persons who have volunteered their services, without waiting for the engineers, who act under the direction of the police. Here is *zeal*, but unfortunately accompanied with *innovation*, at which our author is greatly chagrined. How closely has he copied the example of St. Paul, who rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from envy and contention! With him, the promulgation of divine truth was an object so much at heart, that he was glad to see it accomplished, even from the most criminal motives, and by the most unworthy instruments. With our author, the dissemination of the

same truth, by some of the best of men, and from the purest motives, is matter of lamentation and regret. It requires little attention to perceive he has been taught in a different school from the Apostle, and studied under a different master.

The eternal interests of mankind are either mere chimeras, or they are matters of infinite importance; compared with which, the success of any party, the increase of any external communion whatever, is mere dust in the balance: and for this plain reason, that the promotion of these interests is the very end of Christianity itself. However divided good men may have been with respect to the propriety of legislative interference in the affairs of religion, the arguments by which they have supported their respective opinions, have been uniformly drawn from the supposed tendency of such interference, or the contrary, to advance the moral improvement of mankind; and, supposing this to be ascertained, the superior merit of the system to which that tendency belongs was considered as decided. Viewed in this light, the problem is extensive, affording scope for much investigation; while the authority of religion remains unimpaired, and the disputants on each side are left at liberty to indulge the most enlarged sentiments of candour towards each other. Such were the principles on which Hooker and the ablest of his successors rested their defence of the established church. The High Church Party, of which Mr. Daubeny may be looked upon as the present leader, have taken different grounds. Their system is neither more nor less than Popery, faintly disguised, and adapted to the meridian of England. The writer before us, without avowing the sentiments of Daubeny, displays nearly the same intolerance and bigotry,—under this peculiar disadvantage, that his views want the cohesion of system, his bigotry the support of principle. This formal separa-

tion of the interests of the church from those of true religion, must inevitably produce the most deplorable consequences. Will the serious and conscientious part of the public be led to form a favourable opinion of a religious community, by hearing it avowed, by her champions, that men had better be suffered eternally to perish, than to find salvation out of her pale? Will they not naturally ask what those *higher ends* can be, in comparison of which the eternal welfare of a large portion of our fellow creatures is deemed a trifle? Could such a spirit be supposed generally prevalent in the clergy of the established church, it would at once lose all that is sacred in their eyes, and be looked upon as a mere combination to gain possession of power and emolument under pretence of religion. We are mistaken, if much mischief has not already accrued from the indulgence of this spirit. It has envenomed the ill qualities naturally generated by the domination of a party. It has produced serious injury to the church, by emboldening men to appear in her defence, who bring nothing into the controversy but overweening pride, ceremonial hypocrisy, and priestly insolence. Haughty, contemptuous airs, a visible disdain of the scruples of tender consciences, and frequently of piety itself, except under one garb and fashion, have been too generally assumed by her champions. These features have given inexpressible disgust to pious and candid minds; hurt, as they well may be, to see a religious community, however numerous or respectable, continually vaunting itself, laying exclusive claims to purity and orthodoxy, and seeming to consider it as a piece of condescension to suffer any other denomination to subsist. They cannot dismiss it from their minds, that humility is a virtue proper to a church as well as to an individual, and that ecclesiastical pride may happen to be as offensive to Heaven, as pride of any other

kind. In the church of Rome these qualities have been ever conspicuous ; but finding nothing of this sort in an equal degree, in any other Protestant communion, and recollecting that "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man be laid low," one naturally feels some apprehension that they may not pass unpunished, though they are found in the precincts of a cathedral.

Our author derives no satisfaction from the acknowledged success of Dissenters in turning sinners from the error of their way, from an apprehension that their success may eventually prove injurious to the establishment. He pretends to foresee, from this cause, a continual transfer of hearers from the church to the conventicle. We beg leave to ask the writer, how such a consequence can ensue, but from the superior zeal and piety of sectaries ? To suppose that with only an *equal* share of these qualities they will be able to make successful inroads on the church, is to abandon the defence of the hierarchy altogether ; since this is acknowledging a radical defect in the system, which operates as a dead weight on its exertions, and disqualifies it for maintaining its ground against rivals ; that in short, instead of being the most efficacious mode of exhibiting and impressing revealed truth, it is intrinsically weak and ineffectual. For that system must surely be acknowledged to be so, which is incapable of interesting the people, and which, by rendering public worship less attractive, produces a general preference of a different mode. To suppose this to be the case, is to suppose something essentially wrong, which should be immediately examined and corrected. On this supposition, the men are acquitted ; the system is arraigned. As this, however, is far from being the opinion of the author, the conclusion returns with irresistible force, that a permanent increase of Dissenters can *only* arise

from their superior piety and zeal. Now these are really, in our opinion, qualities too valuable to be dispensed with, whatever interests they may obstruct. Regretting, deeply as we may, in common with our author, that they should have formed an alliance so unfortunate, we must still think it better, not only for their possessors but for the world at large, for them to be found even here, than to have no existence at all; and it is upon this point we are at issue with this *conscientious* reformer. For our parts, we are really so old fashioned and puritanical, that we had rather behold men awakened and converted among Dissenters and Methodists, than see them sleep the sleep of death in the arms of an establishment.

But our author, it seems, is filled with pious alarm for the cause of *orthodoxy*, from the increasing separation from the church. 'By the sound doctrine its instituted forms express, it will,' he tells us, 'as long as it stands, be a witness to the truth, in periods the most barren of ministerial qualification; a rallying point to all truly Christian pastors; and an *accredited voucher for the purity of their instruction*,' p. 17. How much were the primitive Christians to be pitied, who were unhappily destitute of any such 'voucher,' and had nothing to secure the permanence of truth, but the promised presence of Christ, the illumination of the Spirit, and the light of the Scriptures—poor substitutes, undoubtedly, for the solid basis of creeds and formularies! We should readily concur with the author in his views of the security derived from the subscription of articles, if we could forget a few stubborn facts which we beg leave humbly to recal to his recollection. Is it not a fact, that the nature and extent of the assent and consent signified by subscription, has been the subject of a very thorny controversy, in which more ill faith and chicane have been displayed, than were ever

known out of the school of the Jesuits ; and that the issue of this controversy has been to establish very generally the doctrine of Paley, that none are excluded by it but Quakers, Papists, and Baptists ? Is it not a fact, that the press is teeming every week with publications of the most acrimonious description, written by professed churchmen, against persons who have incurred this acrimony merely by their attachment to these articles ? Is it not a fact, that the doctrines they exhibit are so scorned and detested in this country, that whoever seriously maintains them is stigmatized with the name of ' Methodist,' and that that part of the clergy who preach them are *for that reason alone* more insulted and despised by their brethren than even the Dissenters themselves ? It is with peculiar effrontery that this author insists on subscription to articles as a sufficient security for the purity of religious instruction, when it is the professed object of his work to recal his contemporaries to that purity. If he means that the 'voucher' he speaks of answers its purpose because it is credited, he is plainly laughing at the simplicity of the people : if he means to assert it is *intituled* to credit, we must request him to reflect how he can vindicate himself from the charge of '*speaking lies in hypocrisy.*'

A long course of experience has clearly demonstrated the inefficacy of creeds and confessions to perpetuate religious belief. Of this the only faithful depository is, not that which is *written with ink*, but on the *fleshly tables of the heart*. The spirit of error is too subtle and volatile to be held by such chains. Whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history must know, that public creeds and confessions have occasioned more controversies than they have composed ; and that when they ceased to be the subject of dispute, they have become antiquated and obsolete. A vast majority of the Dissenters of the present day hold precisely the same

religious tenets which the Puritans did two centuries ago, because it is the instruction they have uniformly received from their pastors; and for the same reason the articles of the national church are almost effaced from the minds of its members, because they have long been neglected or denied by the majority of those who occupy its pulpits. We have never heard of the church of Geneva altering its confession, but we know that Voltaire boasted there was not in his time a Calvinist in the city; nor have we heard of any proposed amendment in the creed of the Scotch, yet it is certain the doctrines of that creed are preached by a rapidly decreasing minority of the Scottish clergy. From these and similar facts we may fairly conclude, that the doctrines of the church, with or without subscription, are sure to perpetuate themselves where they are faithfully preached; but that the mere circumstance of their being subscribed, will neither secure their being preached nor believed.

'Separatism,' (says the author) '*has no fixed or perpetual character*; what it is at present, we may by attentive observation be able to pronounce; but no human foresight can ascertain what it will be hereafter. Though now in its numerous chapels the soundest doctrine should be heard, we have no security that they will not become the schools of heresy. Here if the licentious teacher get a footing, he moulds the whole system of ministration to his views; not a prayer, not a psalm, not a formulary of any kind, but in this case will become the vehicle of error.' pp. 17, 18.

How far, in creatures so liable to mistake, a fixed and perpetual character is an enviable attribute, we shall not stay to inquire; with what right it is claimed on this occasion, it is not very difficult to determine. The thirty-nine articles will unquestionably always remain the same, that is, they will always be the thirty-nine articles; but it is not quite so certain that they are universally believed, much less that they will always continue to be so; and least of all that, after having

ceased to be believed, they will receive the sanction of every successive legislature. For our parts, such is our simplicity, that when we read of a fixed and perpetual character, our attention is always wandering to men, to some mode of thinking, or feeling, to which such perpetuity belongs, instead of resting in the useful contemplation of pen, ink, and paper. With every disposition, however, to do the author justice, we have some fear for the success of his argument; suspecting the Dissenters will be ready to reply, 'Our pastors cordially embrace the doctrine contained in your Articles; and as this cannot be affirmed of the majority of yours, the question of perpetuity is reduced to this amusing theorem,—In which of two given situations will a doctrine last the longest, where it is believed without being subscribed, or where it is subscribed without being believed?'

The equal justice it is our duty to maintain, obliges us to notice another aspersion which the author casts upon Dissenters.

'Every addition Separatism makes to its supporters, alters the proportion existing in this country between the monarchical and the democratic spirit; either of which preponderating to a considerable degree, might be productive of the most serious consequences. For it is certain, that as our church establishment is favourable to monarchy; so is the constitution of our dissenting congregations to democracy. The latter principle is cherished in all communities, where the power resides not in one, or a few, but is shared, in certain proportions, among all the members; which is the case in most of the religious societies under consideration. Let it be remembered, then, that if religion increase in this way, there is that increasing with it which is not religion; there is something springing up with it which is of a different nature, and which will be sure to stand, whether that better thing with which it may grow, do or not.' p. 20.

In this statement, the author has exhibited his usual inattention to facts. That the people had in the first ages a large share in ecclesiastical proceedings, and that their officers were chosen by themselves, is incontro-

vertibly evident, as well from scripture, as from the authentic monuments of antiquity. The epistles of St. Cyprian, to go no farther, are as full in proof of this point, as if they had been written on purpose to establish it. The transfer of power, first from the people to their ministers, and afterwards from them to the bishop of Rome, was a gradual work, not fully accomplished till many centuries had elapsed from the Christian era. Until the conversion of Constantine, the Christian church was an *imperium in imperio*, a spiritual republic, subsisting in the midst of the Roman empire, on which it was completely independent; and its most momentous affairs were directed by popular suffrage. Nor did it in this state either excite the jealousy, or endanger the repose, of the civil magistrate; since the distinction betwixt the concerns of this world and those of another, so ably illustrated by Locke, taught the Christians of that time to render to Cesar the things which are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Instructed to yield obedience to princes for conscience' sake, they were not the less orderly or submissive, because they declined their interference in the suppression of error, or the punishment of ecclesiastical delinquency. If there be that inseparable connexion between political disaffection and the exercise of popular rights in religion, which this writer contends, the primitive Christians must have been in a deplorable state; since it would have been impossible for them to quiet the just apprehensions of government, without placing a heathen emperor at the head of the church. What must we think of the knowledge of a Writer who was ignorant of these facts, of the candour which suppressed them, or of the humanity which finds an occasion of aspersing his fellow Christians, in what escaped the malignity of heathen persecutors!

The Dissenters will not fail to remind the Writer, that the British is a mixed, not an absolute monarchy; that the habit of considering the people as nothing, is as repugnant to its spirit as that of making them every thing; and that to vest the whole power in the hands of one person without check or control, is more suited to the genius of the Turkish, than the British government. And to this retort it must be confessed, the conduct of the High Church party, who have seldom scrupled to promulgate maxims utterly subversive of liberty, would lend a very colourable support. The whole topic, however, is invidious, absurd, and merely calculated to mislead; since the construction of the Christian church is fixed by the will of its Founder, the dictates of which we are not at liberty to accommodate or bend to the views of human policy. The dispute respecting ecclesiastical government, must, like every other on religion, be determined, if it ever be determined at all, by an appeal to scripture, illustrated, perhaps, occasionally, by the approved usages of the earliest antiquity. To connect political consequences with it, and to make it the instrument of exciting popular odium, is the indication of a bad cause and of a worse heart. After the specimens our readers have already had of the Author's spirit, they will not be surprised to find he is not quite satisfied with the Toleration Act, which, he complains, has been perverted from its purpose of affording relief to tender consciences, to that of *making* Dissenters. We are not acute enough to comprehend this distinction. We have always supposed it was the intention of the legislature, by that Act, to enable Protestant Dissenters to worship where they pleased, after giving proper notice to the magistrate; how their availing themselves of this liberty can be construed into an abuse of the Act, we are at a loss to conceive. This Writer would tolerate Dissenters, but

not allow them to propagate their sentiments ; that is, he would permit them that liberty of thinking which none can restrain, but not of speaking and acting, which are alone subject to the operation of law.

It is quite of a piece with the narrow prejudices of such a man, to complain of it as an intolerable hardship that a minister of the establishment is sometimes in danger, through the undistinguishing spirit of hospitality, of being invited to sit down with religionists of different descriptions ; and he avows his manly resolution of going without his dinner, rather than expose himself to such an indignity. It is certainly a most lamentable thing to reflect, that a regular clergyman may possibly lose caste, by mixing, at the hospitable board, with some of those, who will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. When Burke was informed that Mr. Godwin held gratitude to be a crime, he replied, 'I will take care not to be accessory to his committing that crime.' We hope the lovers of hospitality will take the hint, and never insult the Author of 'Zeal without Innovation' by exposing him to the touch of the ceremonially unclean.

Although we have already trespassed on the patience of our readers, we cannot dismiss this part of the subject without craving their indulgence a little longer. We are much concerned to witness the spirit of intolerance that pervades many recent publications. If the uniform course of experience can prove any thing, it is, that the extension of any particular frame of church government will of itself contribute little to the interests of vital Christianity. Suppose every inhabitant of the kingdom were to return to the bosom of the establishment to-morrow, what real accession would be gained to the kingdom of Christ ? Is there any magic in the change of a name, which can convert careless, profane, irreligious dissenters into devout and pious churchmen ?

The virtuous part of them do honour to the Christian profession in the situation they occupy at present ; and for the vicious, they could only infect and disgrace the community with which they proposed to associate. What means this incessant struggle to raise one party on the ruins of another, this assumption of infallibility, and the clamorous demand for the interposition of the legislature, which we so often witness ? If the writers to whom we allude will honestly tell us they are apprehensive of their 'craft' being in danger, we will give them credit for sincerity ; but to attempt to cover their bigotry under the mask of piety, is too gross a deception. Were the measures adopted for which these men are so violent, they would scarcely prove more injurious to religion than to the interests of the established church ; to which the accession of numbers would be no compensation for the loss of that activity and spirit, which are kept alive by the neighbourhood of rival sects. She would suffer rapid encroachments from infidelity, and the indolence and secularity too incident to opulent establishments would hasten her downfall. Amidst the increasing degeneracy of the clergy, which must be the inevitable effect of destroying the necessity of vigilance and exertion, the people that now crowd the conventicle, would not repair to the church : they would be scattered and dissipated, like water no longer confined within its banks. In a very short time, we have not the smallest doubt, the attendance at church would be much less than it is now. A religion, which by leaving no choice can produce no attachment, a religion invested with the stern rigour of law, and associated in the public mind, and in public practice, with prisons and pillories and gibbets, would be a noble match, to be sure, for the subtle spirit of impiety and the enormous and increasing corruption of the times. It is amusing to reflect what ample elbow-room the

worthy rector would possess ; how freely he might expatiate in his wide domain, and how much the effect of his denunciations against schism would be heightened by echoing through so large a void.

Hic vasto rex *Æolus* antro
Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
Imperio premit.

The Gallican church, no doubt, looked upon it as a signal triumph, when she prevailed on Louis the Fourteenth to repeal the Edict of Nantes, and to suppress the Protestant religion. But what was the consequence ? Where shall we look after this period, for her Fenelons and her Pascals, where for the distinguished monuments of piety and learning which were the glory of her better days ? As for piety, she perceived she had no occasion for it, when there was no lustre of Christian holiness surrounding her ; nor for learning, when she had no longer any opponents to confute, or any controversies to maintain. She felt herself at liberty to become as ignorant, as secular, as irreligious as she pleased ; and amidst the silence and darkness she had created around her, she drew the curtains and retired to rest. The accession of numbers she gained by suppressing her opponents, was like the small extension of length a body acquires by death ; the feeble remains of life were extinguished, and she lay a putrid corpse, a public nuisance, filling the air with pestilential exhalations. Such, there is every reason to believe, would be the effect of similar measures in England. That union among Christians, which it is so desirable to recover, must, we are persuaded, be the result of something more heavenly and divine, than legal restraints, or angry controversies. Unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the

spirit of division is a disease which will never be healed by troubling the waters. We must expect the cure from the increasing prevalence of religion, and from a copious communication of the Spirit to produce that event. A more extensive diffusion of piety among all sects and parties will be the best and only preparation for a cordial union. Christians will then be disposed to appreciate their differences more equitably, to turn their chief attention to points on which they agree, and, in consequence of loving each other more, to make every concession consistent with a good conscience. Instead of wishing to vanquish others, every one will be desirous of being vanquished by the truth. An awful fear of God, and an exclusive desire of discovering his mind, will hold a torch before them in their inquiries, which will strangely illuminate the path in which they are to tread. In the room of being repelled by mutual antipathy, they will be insensibly drawn nearer to each other by the ties of mutual attachment. A larger measure of the spirit of Christ would prevent them from converting every incidental variation into an impassable boundary, or from condemning the most innocent and laudable usages for fear of symbolizing with another class of Christians,—an odious spirit, with which the Writer under consideration is strongly impregnated. The general prevalence of piety in different communities, would inspire that mutual respect, that heartfelt homage for the virtues conspicuous in the character of their respective members, which would urge us to ask with astonishment and regret, Why cannot we be one? What is it that obstructs our union? Instead of maintaining the barrier which separates us from each other, and employing ourselves in fortifying the frontiers of hostile communities, we should be anxiously devising the means of narrowing the grounds of dispute, by drawing the attention of all

parties to those fundamental and catholic principles, in which they concur.

To this we may add, that a more perfect subjection to the authority of the great Head of the Church would restrain men from inventing new terms of communion, from lording it over conscience, or from exacting a scrupulous compliance with things which the word of God has left indifferent. That sense of imperfection we ought ever to cherish, would incline us to be looking up for superior light, and make us think it not improbable that, in the long night which has befallen us, we have all more or less mistaken our way, and have much to learn and much to correct. The very idea of identifying a particular party with the church would be exploded, the foolish clamour about schism hushed; and no one, however mean and inconsiderable, be expected to surrender his conscience to the claims of ecclesiastical dominion. The New Testament is surely not so obscure a book, that, were its contents to fall into the hands of a hundred serious impartial men, it would produce such opposite conclusions as must necessarily issue in their forming two or more separate communions. It is remarkable, indeed, that the chief points about which real Christians are divided, are points on which that volume is silent; mere human fabrications, which the presumption of men has attached to the Christian system. A larger communication of the Spirit of truth would insensibly lead Christians into a similar train of thinking; and being more under the guidance of that infallible Teacher, they would gradually tend to the same point, and settle in the same conclusions. Without such an influence as this, the coalescing into one communion would probably be productive of much mischief: it certainly would do no sort of good, since it would be the mere result of intolerance and pride, acting upon indolence and fear.

During the present disjointed state of things, then, nothing remains, but for every one to whom the care of any part of the Church of Christ is intrusted, to exert himself to the utmost in the promotion of vital religion, in cementing the friendship of the good, and repressing, with a firm and steady hand, the heats and eruptions of party spirit. He will find sufficient employment for his time and his talents, in inculcating the great truths of the gospel, and endeavoring to 'form Christ' in his hearers, without blowing the flames of contention, or widening that breach which is already the disgrace and calamity of the Christian name. Were our efforts uniformly to take this direction, there would be an *identity* in the impression made by religious instruction; the distortion of party features would gradually disappear, and Christians would every where approach toward that ideal beauty spoken of by painters, which is combined of the finest lines and traits conspicuous in individual forms. Since they have all drank into the same spirit, it is manifest nothing is wanting, but a larger portion of that spirit, to lay the foundation of a solid, cordial union. It is to the immoderate attachment to secular interest, the love of power, and the want of reverence for truth, not to the obscurities of Revelation, we must impute the unhappy contentions among Christians—maladies, which nothing can correct, but deep and genuine piety. The true *schismatic* is not so properly the person who declines a compliance with what he judges to be wrong, though he may be mistaken in that judgment, as the man who, like the author before us, sedulously employs every artifice to alienate the affections of good men from each other.

Having animadverted on the illiberality of this writer toward persons of different persuasions, we now proceed to notice his representations of the state of religion,

together with his treatment of that description of the clergy with whom he has been accustomed to associate.

The cause of religion he represents as in a very declining state.

'Some persons now living,' he says, 'can remember the time, when absence from church was far from being so common as it is now become. Then the more considerable heads of families were generally seen in the house of God, with their servants as well as children. This visible acknowledgment of the importance of religion had a good effect on families of inferior condition: the presence of the merchant and his household, brought the tradesman and his family; and the example of the latter, induced his journeymen and out-door servants to come to church. But this is not a description of modern habits. In many pews once regularly filled by the entire household to which they belonged, it is now common to see only a small portion of the family, and often not an individual. Two or three of the younger branches, from the female side of the house, occasionally attend, with, perhaps, the mother: but without the father, and the sons; the father, wearied with business, wants a little relaxation; and to the young men, not suspecting their want of instruction, a rural excursion offers something interesting, while the tranquil service of a church is too tame an occupation for their unexhausted spirits. Nor among the few who attend public worship are they always the same individuals that we see in the house of God. So that it does not appear to be from steady principle, and still less from the influence of parental authority, that some of the family are occasionally there. The children are left to themselves; they may go to church if they choose to do so; they incur no displeasure from the father, they excite no grief in his bosom if they stay away. There is no disreputation attaching to absence. It falls rather upon the contrary conduct: any uniform attendance on divine worship being frequently considered a mark of imbecility, or demureness.

'To account for the thinness of our parochial congregations, some allege, that there is not a sufficient quantity of naturally attractive circumstances in the ordinary service of the church. But it is observable, that where our liturgy is used in its *grandest* form, the attendance is as far from being numerous as it is elsewhere. It might be expected, and especially in an age in which a taste for *music* so generally prevails, that in a metropolis containing near a million of inhabitants, there might be more persons drawn by the grandeur of cathedral worship, to the place where it is performed, than could well be accommodated in one church. The cathedral of London, however, presents no such scene. With a numerous attendance of ministers, the finest specimens of church-music, and these performed with that effect which professional qualification gives to such compositions, the seats at St. Paul's cathedral are seldom half filled.' pp. 2—4.

Though we acknowledge the truth of his statement, in a great measure, we are far from drawing from it the inference he wishes to impress. Whenever places of worship are thinly attended, at least in the established church, we have uniformly found it to proceed from a cause very distinct from the general decay of piety ; it results from the absence of that sort of instruction which naturally engages the attention and fixes the heart. In one view, we are fully aware a great alteration has taken place : an attachment to the mere forms of religion has much subsided ; the superstitious reverence, formerly paid to consecrated places and a pompous ceremonial, has waxed old ; so that nothing will now command a full attendance at places set apart for divine worship, but the preaching of the gospel,—or of something, at least, that may be mistaken for it. Instead of concurring with the author in considering this as evincing the low state of Christianity amongst us, we are disposed to look upon it in a contrary light ; being fully convinced that a readiness to acquiesce in the mere forms and ceremonies of religion, to the neglect of that truth which sanctifies the church, is one of the most dangerous errors to which men can be exposed. There is something in the constitution of human nature so abhorrent from the absence of all religion, that we are inclined to believe more are ruined by embracing some counterfeit instead of the true, than by the rejection of true and false altogether. We are not sorry therefore to learn, that the music at St. Paul's is not found a sufficient substitute for 'the joyful sound,' nor a numerous show of ministers accepted by the people, in the room of 'Christ crucified set forth before them.' Let the truths which concern men's eternal salvation be faithfully taught in that noble edifice, and the complaint of slender attendance will soon cease. In the mean time, of that part of the citizens who might be expected to fre-

quent the cathedral, some are too gay and fashionable not to prefer the music of the theatre and the opera, and some are serious Christians, whose hunger for the bread of life will not be satisfied or diverted by the symphonies of an organ, or the splendour of canonical dresses.

He who is resolved to see nothing but what grows in his own inclosure, may report that 'all is barren,' though the fields around him bloomed like the garden of Eden : and such is the strength of this writer's prejudices, that it is morally impossible for him to give a just representation of facts. In forming his estimate of the state of religion, he is resolved to look only where he knows nothing is to be seen ; and absurdly complains of the want of a crop, where he is conscious the soil has never been cultivated. Effects must be looked for from their natural causes : men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, nor are the fruits of Christianity to be expected in the absence of the gospel. Notwithstanding this writer's gloomy prognostications, we have no doubt of the kingdom of Christ making sensible advances ; and in support of this opinion we adduce the wider extension of religious truth, the multitude of places where the gospel is preached in its purity, the general disposition to attend it, the establishment of Sunday schools, the circulation, with happy effect, of innumerable tracts, the translation of the Scriptures into foreign languages, and their more extensive communication to all nations, the formation of Missionary societies, the growing unanimity among Christians, and the prodigious increase of faithful ministers in the established church. We presume these facts may be allowed a degree of weight, sufficient to overbalance the thin attendance at St. Paul's. It is not a little surprising, that a writer, who professes to exhibit a correct idea of the religious state of the nation, should pay no attention

to these circumstances, or content himself with alluding to them in terms expressive of chagrin and vexation. Regarding the extensive institutions, and the diffusive benefits, which the efforts of serious Christians in different connexions have produced, as a contraband article, not entitled to be mentioned in the estimate of our moral wealth, he represents us as generally sunk in spiritual sloth and poverty. We should not learn from this writer, that attempts were making for the universal propagation of Christianity, that translations of the Scriptures were going on in different languages, or that a zeal for the conversion of pagans had occasioned a powerful re-action at home, by producing efforts hitherto unexampled toward carrying the gospel into the darkest corners of the kingdom; we should never suspect, from reading his work, that any material alteration had taken place within the last fifty years, or that new life had been infused into the professing world, beyond what we might conjecture perhaps from certain indirect references, and dark insinuations. Without noticing these facts, he calls upon us to join in pathetic lamentations over the prostrate state of religion, upon no better ground, than the neglect of places of worship where the gospel is *not* preached, and where there is little to attract attention, beside the privilege of hearing *fine music*, and seeing *fine ministers*, for nothing. It is a consolation to us to be convinced, that the state of things is much otherwise than he represents; that more persons are brought acquainted with the glad tidings of the gospel, and more minds penetrated with the concerns of eternity, than at any period since the Reformation.

Thus far we dispute the justice of this author's statement, and are disposed to question the truth of the inference he has drawn from some insulated facts. But this is not the only fault we have to find with this part

of his work. He has not only, in our opinion, been betrayed into erroneous conclusions, but has utterly failed in catching the distinguishing features in the aspect of the times, so that his picture bears no sort of resemblance to the original. He has painted nothing ; he has only given an account of a particular distortion or two ; so that a foreigner would no more be able, by reading his work, to form an idea of the state of religion in England, than of a countenance he had never seen, by being told its chin was too long, or its nostrils were too wide. It must be evident to every one, that the most striking characteristic of the present times, is the violent, the outrageous opposition that is made to religion by multitudes, and the general disposition in the members of the community to take a decided part. To this circumstance, the writer has never adverted. It is impossible to suppose it could escape his attention ; we must therefore impute his silence to the well-weighed dictates of prudence, which admonished him of the possibility of betraying himself into inconveniencies by such a discussion ; nor need we be surprised, notwithstanding his boasted magnanimity, at his yielding to these suggestions, since his magnanimity is of that sort, which makes a man very ready to insult his brethren, but very careful not to disgust his superiors. As we are happily exempt from these scruples, we shall endeavour, in as few words as possible, to put the reader in possession of our ideas on this subject.

The leading truths of revelation were all along retained in the church of Rome, but buried under such a mass of absurd opinions and supersitious observances, that they drew but little attention, and exerted a very inconsiderable influence in the practical application of the system. At the Reformation, they were effectually extricated and disengaged from errors with which they had been mingled, were presented in a blaze of

light, and formed the basis of our national creed. As it was by pushing them to their legitimate consequences, that the reformers were enabled to achieve the conquest of Popery, they were for a while retained in their purity, and every deviation from them denounced as menacing a revolt to the enemy. The Articles of the church were a real transcript of the principles the reformers were most solicitous to inculcate; and being supported by the mighty impulse which produced the reformation, while that remained fresh and unbroken, they constituted the real faith of the people. Afterwards they underwent an eclipse in the Protestant Church of England, as they had done in the Church of Rome, though from causes somewhat different. The low Arminianism and intolerant bigotry of *Laud* paved the way for a change, which was not a little aided and advanced by the unbounded licentiousness and profligacy which overspread the kingdom after the Restoration: for it must be remembered that there is an intimate connexion between the perception and relish of truth and a right disposition of mind, that they have a reciprocal influence on each other, and that the mystery of faith can only be placed with safety in a pure conscience. When lewdness, profaneness, and indecency reigned without control, and were practised without a blush, nothing, we may be certain, could be more repugnant to the prevailing taste, than the undulterated word of God. There arose also, at this time, a set of divines, who partly in compliance with the popular humour, partly to keep at a distance from the Puritans, and partly to gain the infidels, who then began to make their appearance, introduced a new sort of preaching, in which the doctrines of the reformation as they are usually styled, were supplanted by copious and elaborate disquisitions on points of morality. Their fame and ability emboldened their successors to improve

upon their patterns, by consigning the articles of the church to a still more perfect oblivion, by losing sight still more entirely of the peculiarities of the gospel, guarding more anxiously against every sentiment or expression that could agitate or alarm, and by shortening the length, and adding as much as possible to the dryness of their moral lucubrations. From that time, the idea commonly entertained in England of a perfect sermon, was that of a discourse upon some moral topic, clear, correct, and argumentative, in the delivery of which the preacher must be free from all suspicion of being moved himself, or of intending to produce emotions in his hearers ; in a word, as remote as possible from such a method of reasoning on righteousness, temperance, and judgement, as should make a Felix tremble. This idea was very successfully realized, this singular model of pulpit eloquence carried to the utmost perfection ; so that while the bar, the parliament, and the theatre, frequently agitated and inflamed their respective auditories, the church was the only place, where the most feverish sensibility was sure of being laid to rest. This inimitable apathy in the mode of imparting religious instruction, combined with the utter neglect of whatever is most touching or alarming in the discoveries of the gospel, produced their natural effect of extinguishing devotion in the established church, and of leaving it to be possessed by the dissenters ; of whom it was considered as the distinguishing badge, and from that circumstance derived an additional degree of unpopularity. From these causes, the people gradually became utterly alienated from the articles of the church, eternal concerns dropped out of the mind, and what remained of religion was confined to an attention to a few forms and ceremonies. If any exception can be made to the justice of these observations, it respects the doctrines of the Trinity and the

Atonement, which were often defended with ability, though in a dry and scholastic manner, and the discussion of which served to mark the return of the principal festivals of the church ; while other points not less important, such as the corruption of human nature, the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, were either abandoned to oblivion, or held up to ridicule and contempt. The consequence was, that the creed established by law had no sort of influence in forming the sentiments of the people, the pulpit completely vanquished the desk, piety and puritanism were confounded in one common reproach, an almost pagan darkness in the concerns of salvation prevailed, and the English became the most irreligious people upon earth.

Such was the situation of things, when Whitefield and Wesley made their appearance ; who, whatever failings the severest criticism can discover in their character, will be hailed by posterity as the second reformers of England. Nothing was farther from the views of these excellent men, than to innovate in the established religion of their country ; their sole aim was to recal the people to the good old way, and to imprint the doctrine of the articles and homilies on the spirits of men. But this doctrine had been confined so long to a dead letter, and so completely obliterated from the mind by contrary instruction, that the attempt to revive it met with all the opposition which innovation is sure to encounter, in addition to what naturally results from the nature of the doctrine itself, which has to contend with the whole force of human corruption. The revival of the old, appeared like the introduction of a new religion ; and the hostility it excited was less sanguinary, but scarcely less virulent, than that which signalized the first publication of Christianity. The gospel of Christ, or that system of truth which was laid as the foundation of the reformation, has since made rapid

advances, and in every step of its progress has sustained the most furious assault. Great Britain exhibits the singular spectacle of two parties contending, not whether Christianity shall be received or rejected, but whether it shall be allowed to retain any thing spiritual ; not whether the articles and homilies shall be repealed, but whether they shall be laid as the basis of public instruction. Infidelity being too much discredited by the atrocities in France to hope for public countenance, the enemies of religion, instead of attacking the outworks of Christianity, are obliged to content themselves with vilifying and misrepresenting its distinguishing doctrines. They are willing to retain the Christian religion, providing it continue inefficient ; and are wont to boast of their attachment to the established church, when it is manifest there is little in it they admire except its splendour and its emoluments. The clerical order, we are sorry to say, first set the example ; and, since evangelical principles have been more widely diffused, have generally appeared in the foremost ranks of opposition. This is nothing more than might be naturally looked for. With all the respect we feel for the clergy, on account of their learning and talents, it is impossible not to know that many of them are mere men of the world, who have consequently the same objections to the gospel as others, together with some peculiar to themselves. As the very attempt of reviving doctrines which have been obliterated through their neglect implies a tacit censure of their measures, so, wherever that attempt succeeds, it diminishes the weight of their ecclesiastical character. Deserted by the people, and eclipsed in the public esteem by many much their inferiors in literary attainments, they feel indignant : and if, as we will suppose, they sometimes suspect their being neglected has arisen from their inattention to important truths and indispensable duties, this increases their

uneasiness, which, if it fails to reform, will inevitably exasperate them still more against those who are the innocent occasions of it. It is but fair to acknowledge, that in conducting the controversy they have generally kept within decent bounds, have often reasoned where others have railed, and have usually abstained from topics hackneyed by infidels and scoffers. But they cannot be vindicated from the charge, of having, by a formal opposition to the gospel, inflamed the irreligious prejudices of the age, obstructed the work they were appointed to promote, and emboldened others, who had none of their scruples or restraints, to outrage piety itself. The dragon has cast from his mouth such a flood of heresy and mischief, that Egypt, in the worst of her plagues, was not covered with more loathsome abominations. Creatures, which we did not suspect to have existed, have come forth from their retreats, some soaring into the regions of impiety on vigorous pinions, others crawling on the earth with a slow and sluggish motion, only to be tracked through the filthy slime of their impurities. We have seen writers of every order, from the Polyphemuses of the North, to the contemptible dwarfs of the Critical Review; men of every party, infidels, churchmen, and dissenters,—a motley crew, who have not one thing in common, except their antipathy to religion,—join hands and heart on this occasion: a deadly taint of impiety has blended them in one mass, as things, the most discordant while they are *living* substances will do perfectly well to putrefy together.

We are not at all alarmed at this extensive combination; we doubt not of its producing the most happy effects. It has arisen from the alarm the great enemy has felt at the extension of the gospel; and, by drawing the attention of the world more powerfully to it, will ultimately aid the cause it is intended to subvert.

The public will not long be at a loss to determine where the truth lies, when they see, in one party, a visible fear of God, a constant appeal to his oracles, a solicitude to promote the salvation of mankind ; in the other, an indecent levity, an unbridled insolence, an unblushing falsehood, a hard unfeeling pride, a readiness to adopt any principles and assume any mask that will answer their purpose, together with a manifest aim to render the scriptures of no authority, and religion of no effect.

Having so often alluded to the 'evangelical clergy,' we shall close this division of our remarks, with exhibiting a slight outline of the doctrine by which the clergy of this class are distinguished. The term *evangelical* was first given them, simply on account of their preaching the gospel ; or, in other words, their exhibiting with clearness and precision the peculiar truths of Christianity. In every system there are some principles which serve to identify it, and in which its distinguishing essence consists. In the system of Christianity, the rules of moral duty are not entitled to be considered in this light, partly because they are not peculiar to it, and partly because they are retained by professed infidels, who avow without scruple their admiration of the morality of the-gospel. We must look then elsewhere, for the distinguishing character of Christianity. It must be sought for in its doctrines,—and, (as its professed design is to conduct men to eternal happiness,) in those doctrines which relate to the way of salvation, or the method of a sinner's reconciliation with God. There are some, we are aware, who would reduce the whole faith of a Christian to a belief of the Messiahship of Christ, without reflecting that, until we have fixed some specific ideas to the term Messiah, the proposition which affirms him to be such contains no information. The most discordant apprehensions

are entertained by persons who equally profess that belief; some affirming him to be a mere man, others a being of the angelic order, and a third party, essentially partaker of the divine nature. The first of these look upon his sufferings as merely exemplary; the last, as propitiatory and vicarious. It must be evident then, from these views being at the utmost distance from each other, that the proposition that Christ is the Messiah conveys little information, while the import of its principal term is left vague and undetermined. The Socinian and Trinitarian, notwithstanding their verbal agreement, having a different object of worship, and a different ground of confidence, must be allowed to be of different religions. It requires but a very cursory perusal of the Articles of the established Church, to determine to which of these systems *they* lend *their* support; or to perceive that the deity of Christ, the doctrine of atonement for sin, the guilt and apostasy of man, and the necessity of the agency of the Spirit to restore the divine image, are asserted by them in terms the most clear and unequivocal. This question stands quite independent of the Calvinistic controversy. Are the clergy, styled evangelical, to be blamed for preaching *these* doctrines? Before this can be allowed, the Articles must be cancelled by the same authority by which they were established; or it must be shewn how it consists with integrity, to gain an introduction to the church, by signifying an unfeigned assent and consent to certain articles of religion, with the intention of immediately banishing them from notice. The clamour against the clergy in question, cannot, without an utter contempt of decency, be excited by the mere fact of their being known to hold and inculcate these doctrines; but by the manner of their teaching them, or the exclusive attention they are supposed to pay them to the neglect of other parts of the system. The measure of

zeal they display for them, they conceive to be justified, as well by a view of the actual state of human nature, as by the express declaration of the inspired oracles. Conceiving, with the compilers of the articles, that the state of man is that of a fallen and apostate creature, they justly conclude that a mere code of morals is inadequate to his relief; that having lost the favour of God by his transgression, he requires not merely to be instructed in the rules of duty, but in the method of regaining the happiness he has forfeited; that the pardon of sin, or some compensation to divine justice for the injury he has done to the majesty of the Supreme Lawgiver, are the objects which ought, in the first place, to occupy his attention. An acquaintance with the rules of duty may be sufficient to teach an innocent creature how to secure the felicity he possesses, but can afford no relief to a guilty conscience, nor instruct the sinner how to recover the happiness he has lost. Let it be remembered, that Christianity is essentially a restorative dispensation; it bears a continual respect to a state from which man is fallen, and is a provision for repairing that ruin which the introduction of moral evil has brought upon him. Exposed to the displeasure of God and the curse of his law, he stands in need of a Redeemer; disordered in his powers, and criminally averse to his duty, he equally needs a Sanctifier. As adapted to such a situation, much of the New Testament is employed in displaying the character and unfolding the offices of both, with a view of engaging him to embrace that scheme of mercy, which the divine benignity has thought fit to exhibit in the gospel. The intention of St. John, in composing the evangelical history, coincides with the entire purpose and scope of revelation: *'These things are written,'* said he, *'that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through his*

name. Whoever considers that, upon every hypothesis except the Socinian, Christianity is a provision of mercy for an apostate and sinful world, through a divine Mediator, will acknowledge that something more is included in the idea of preaching the gospel, than the inculcation of moral duties; and that he, who confines his attention to these, exchanges the character of a Christian pastor for that of a fashionable declaimer or a philosophical moralist. If we turn our eyes to the ministry of the apostles, we perceive it to have consisted in 'testifying repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' repentance, which is natural religion modified by the circumstances of a fallen creature, including a return to the path of duty; and faith, which is a practical compliance with the Christian dispensation, by receiving the Saviour as the way, the truth, and the life. Faith and repentance being the primary duties enjoined under the gospel, and the production of these the professed end of the inspired writers, we need not wonder that those, who are ambitious to tread in their steps, insist much, in the course of their ministry, on the topics which supply the principal motives to these duties;—the evil of sin, the extent of human corruption, together with the dignity, power, and grace of the Redeemer. Remembering that the object of repentance is God, they do not, in treating of sin, satisfy themselves with displaying its mischievous effects in society: they expatiate on its contrariety to the divine nature; they speak of it chiefly as an affront offered to the authority of the Supreme Ruler; and represent no repentance as genuine, which springs not from godly sorrow, or a concern for having displeased God. In this part of their office, they make use of the moral law, which requires the devotion of the whole heart and unflinching obedience, as the sword of the Spirit, to pierce the conscience, and to convince men *that by the deeds*

of it no flesh living can be justified, but that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God. The uniform course of experience serves to convince them, that, till a deep impression of this truth be made on the heart, the character of the Saviour, and the promise of pardon through his blood, will produce no gratitude, and excite no interest. In inculcating faith in Christ, they cannot satisfy themselves with merely exhibiting the evidences of Christianity; a mere assent to which upon historical grounds, undeniably fails, in innumerable instances, of producing those effects which are uniformly ascribed to that principle in the New Testament,—neither overcoming the world, nor purifying the heart, nor inducing newness of life. They are of opinion, that the external evidences of the Christian religion are chiefly of importance, on account of their tendency to fix the attention on Christ, the principal object exhibited in that dispensation; and the faith on which the Scriptures lay so much stress, and connect with such ineffable benefits, they conceive essentially to involve a personal reliance on Christ for salvation, accompanied with a cordial submission to his authority. Attempting to produce this scriptural faith, in a dependence upon the divine blessing (without which the best means will be unsuccessful,) they dwell much on the dignity of his character as the Son of God, the admirable constitution of his person as *Immanuel, God with us*, the efficacy of his atonement, and the gracious tenor of his invitations, together with the agency of that Spirit which is intrusted to him as the Mediator, to be imparted to the members of his mystical body. In their view, to preach the gospel is to preach Christ; they perceive the New Testament to be full of him; and while they imbibe that spirit with which it is replete, they feel a sacred ambition to diffuse ‘the saviour of his name in every place.’

Let it not be inferred from hence, that they are inattentive to the interests of practical religion, or that their ministry is merely occupied in explaining and enforcing a doctrinal system. None lay more stress on the duties of a holy life, or urge with more constancy the necessity of their hearers shewing their faith by their works; and they are incessantly affirming with St. James, that the former without the latter is dead, being alone. Though in common with the inspired writers they ascribe their transition, from a state of death to a state of justification, solely to faith in Christ previous to good works actually performed, yet they equally insist upon a performance of those works as the evidence of justifying faith; and, supposing life to be spared, as the indispensable condition of final happiness. The law, not altered in its requirements, (for what was once duty they conceive to be duty still)—but attuned in its sanctions to the circumstances of a fallen creature, they exhibit as the perpetual standard of rectitude, as the sceptre of majesty by which the Saviour rules his disciples. They conceive it to demand the same things, though not with the same rigour, under the gospel dispensation as before: the matter of duty they look upon us as unalterable, and the only difference to be this, that whereas under the covenant of works the condition of life was sinless obedience, under the new covenant, an obedience sincere and affectionate, though imperfect, is accepted for the sake of the Redeemer. At the same time, they do not cease to maintain, that the faith which they hold to be justifying comprehends in it the seminal principle of every virtue, that if genuine, it will not fail to be fruitful, and that a Christian has it in his power to show his faith *‘by his works,’* and by no other means. Under a full conviction of the fallen state of man, together with his moral incapacity to do what is pleasing to God, they

copiously insist on the agency of the Spirit, and affectionately urge their hearers to implore his gracious assistance. From *no class* of men will you hear more solemn warnings against sin, more earnest calls to repentance, or more full and distinct delineations of the duties resulting from every relation in life, accompanied with a peculiar advantage of drawing, from the mysteries of the gospel, the strongest motives to strengthen the abhorrence of the one, and enforce the practice of the other. In their hands, morality loses nothing but the pagan air with which it is too often infested : the morality which they enjoin is of heavenly origin, the pure emanation of truth and love, sprinkled with atoning blood, and baptized into an element of Christian sanctity. That they are not indifferent to the interests of virtue, is sufficiently apparent, from the warm approbation they uniformly express of the excellent work of Mr. Wilberforce, which is not more conspicuous for the orthodoxy of its tenets, than for the purity and energy of its moral instruction. If we look at the effects produced from the ministry of these men, they are such as might be expected to result from a faithful exhibition of the truth of God. Wherever they labour, careless sinners are awakened, profligate transgressors are reclaimed, the mere form of religion is succeeded by the power, and fruits of genuine piety appear in the holy and exemplary lives of their adherents. A visible reformation in society at large, and in many instances unequivocal proofs of solid conversion, attest the purity of their doctrines, and the utility of their labours ; effects, which we challenge their enemies to produce where a different sort of teaching prevails.

The controversy between them and their opponents, to say the truth, turns on a point of the greatest magnitude ; the question at issue respects the choice of a supreme end, and whether we will take 'the Lord to

be our God.¹ Their opponents are for confining religion to an acknowledgment of the being of a God, and the truth of the Christian revelation, accompanied with some external rites of devotion, while the world is allowed the exclusive dominion of the heart: *they* are for carrying into effect the apostolic commission, by summoning men to repentance; and engaging them to an entire surrender of themselves to the service of God through a Mediator. In the system of human life, their opponents assign to devotion a very narrow and limited agency: *they* contend for its having the supreme control. The former expect nothing from religion, but the restraint of outward enormities by the fear of future punishment; in the views of the latter, it is productive of positive excellence, a perennial spring of peace, purity, and joy. Instead of regarding it as a matter of occasional reference, they consider it as a principle of constant operation. While their opponents always overlook and frequently deny the specific difference between the church and the world; in *their* views, the Christian is a pilgrim and stranger in the earth, one whose heart is in heaven, and who is supremely engaged in the pursuit of eternal realities. Their fiercest opposers, it is true, give to Jesus Christ the title of the Saviour of the world; but it requires very little attention to perceive, that their hope of future happiness is placed on the supposed preponderancy of the virtues over the vices, and the claims which they thence conceive to result on the *justice* of God: while the opposite party consider themselves as mere pensioners on *mercy*, flee for refuge to the cross, and ascribe their hopes of salvation entirely to the grace of the Redeemer.

For our parts, supposing the being and perfections of God once ascertained, we can conceive of no point at which we can be invited to stop, short of that serious piety and habitual devotion which the evangelical cler-

gy enforce. To live without religion, to be devoid of habitual devotion, is natural and necessary in him who disbelieves the existence of its object ; but upon what principles he can justify his conduct, who professes to believe in a Deity, without aiming to please him in all things, without placing his happiness in his favour, we are utterly at a loss to comprehend.

We cannot dismiss this part of the subject, without remarking the exemplary moderation of the clergy of this class on those intricate points which unhappily divide the Christian church ; the questions, we mean, that relate to predestination and free will, on which, equally remote from Pelagian heresy and Antinomian licentiousness, they freely tolerate and indulge a diversity of opinion, embracing Calvinists and Arminians with little distinction, provided the Calvinism of the former be practical and moderate, and the Arminianism of the latter evangelical and devout. The greater part of them lean, we believe, to the doctrine of general redemption, and love to represent the gospel as bearing a friendly aspect toward the eternal happiness of all to whom it is addressed : but they are much less anxious to establish a polemical accuracy, than to ' win souls to Christ.'

The opposition they encounter from various quarters, will not surprise those who reflect, that they are not of the world, that the world loves only its own, and naturally feels a dislike to such as testify that its works are evil. The Christianity of the greater part of the community is merely nominal ; and it necessarily follows, that, wherever the truths of religion are faithfully exhibited and practically exemplified, they will be sure to meet with the same friends and the same enemies as at the first promulgation ; they will be still exposed to assault from the prejudices of unrenewed minds, they will be upheld by the same almighty power, and

will continue to insinuate themselves into the hearts of the simple and sincere with the same irresistible force.

We hope our readers will excuse the length to which we have extended our delineation of the principles of the clergy styled 'evangelical,' reflecting how grossly they have been misrepresented, and that, until the subject is placed fairly and fully in view, it is impossible to form an equitable judgement of the treatment they have met with from the writer under consideration.

The first charge he adduces against the evangelical clergy, is that of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, according to Mr. Locke, is that state of mind, which disposes a person to give a stronger assent to a religious proposition than the evidence will justify. According to the more common and popular notion, it implies a pretence to supernatural communications, on which is founded a belief in certain doctrines and the performance of certain actions, which the scriptures have not authorised or revealed—a dangerous delusion, as it tends to disannul the standard of religion; and, by the extravagancies and follies it produces, to bring piety into disgrace. We hold enthusiasm in as much abhorrence as our author does; but we ask, what is the proportion of the evangelical clergy, who are guilty of it; and, for every individual amongst them, to whom it attaches, we will engage to produce *ten* amongst their opponents who are deficient in the essential branches of *morality*. Yet we should esteem it extreme illiberality in a writer to brand the clergy in general with immorality. There may be some few, among the many hundreds whom the author has undertaken to describe, who are real enthusiasts; but where is the candour or justice of mingling this feature in the delineation of the body? We appeal to the religious public, whether they are not, on the contrary, eminently conspicu-

ous for their close adherence 'to the law and to the testimony,' and for their care to enjoin nothing on their hearers without direct warrant from the bible. If every one is to be charged with enthusiasm, whose piety is of a more fervid complexion than the accuser is disposed to sympathize with, or can readily account for, we must indeed despair of convincing this writer of the futility of his allegation. They have the *zeal*, which, to him who makes what is most prevalent in the church his model, must look like *innovation*.

He frequently insinuates, that there is a disposition in them to symbolise with the Dissenters, though he had allowed, at the very outset of his work, that they most strictly conform to the prescribed ritual, have no scruples against canonical obedience, and are most firmly attached to the ecclesiastical constitution. Speaking of the established church, he says,

They, (the evangelical clergy) approve, they admire the Church in which they serve. They rejoice in being ministers of such a church. Instead of being indifferent to its continuance, their dearest wish is, that it may stand firm on its basis. They consider it as the greatest of blessings to their country. They observe, with no little anxiety, separatism gaining ground upon it. And this, not from an invidious principle, but because hereby an alienation *in perpetuity* is produced in many minds, from a constitution, which they consider as best providing for the universal conveyance, and permanent publication of Christian truth. Its continuance they likewise consider, as the surest pledge of religious liberty, to all who wish for that blessing. And in this view, they pity the short-sightedness of those religious persons, who forward any measures, which make against the stability of the national church. They view them as men undermining the strongest bulwark of *their own* security and comfort; and conceive, that Protestant sects of every name, however they might prefer their own modes of religion, would devoutly pray for the support and prosperity of the Church of England, as it now stands—"*sua si bona norint*." In short, the ecclesiastical establishment of this country is, in their views, what "the ark of God" was in the estimation of the pious Israelite; and, "their hearts tremble" more for that, than for any thing else, the stability of which may seem to be endangered in these eventful times. They would consider its fall, as one of the heaviest judgments that could befall the nation.' pp. 128, 129.

Any such approach to the Dissenters, as is inconsistent with their professional engagements, is incompatible with the truth of this testimony. But let us go on to notice another imputation.

'I am constrained,' says the author, 'to admit that there is a great deal of truth in what is often alleged by their opponents, namely, that under their preaching there has arisen an unfavourable opinion of the body of the clergy. To excite a hatred of what is evil, is, undoubtedly, one purpose of Christian instruction. But while the preacher is attempting this, he must take care that he do not call forth the malignant passions. This he is almost sure to do, if he point out a certain set of men, as persons to whom his reprehensions particularly apply. The hearers, too generally apt to forget themselves, are drawn still further from the consideration of their own faults, when they can find a defined class of men, on whom they can fasten the guilt of any alleged error; on them they will discharge their gall, and mistake their rancour for *righteousness*.' pp. 154, 155, Sec. Edit.

Two questions arise on this point; first, how far an unfavourable opinion of the body of the Clergy is just, and secondly, what sort of influence the evangelical party have had in producing it. 'The Clergy as a body,' the author complains, 'are considered by them and their adherents, as men who do not preach the gospel.' If we understand him, he means to assert that the clergy as a body *do* preach the gospel; for we cannot suspect him of being so ridiculous, as to complain of their being considered in their just and true light. Here we have the very singular spectacle of gospel ministers exclaiming with bitterness against some of their brethren for preaching the doctrines of the new birth, justification by faith, the internal operations of the Spirit, and whatever else characterised the faith of the reformers; which we have the satisfaction of learning, from this most liberal writer, are no parts of the gospel. Or, if he demur in assenting to such a proposition, it is incumbent on him to explain what are the *doctrines distinct* from those we

have mentioned, the inculcation of which has excited the opposition of the clergy. We in our great simplicity supposed that the ministers styled evangelical had been opposed for insisting on points intimately related to the gospel; but we are now taught from high authority, that the controversy is entirely of another kind, and relates to subjects with respect to which the preachers of the gospel may indifferently arrange themselves on either side. We are under great obligations to our author for clearing up this perplexing affair, and so satisfactorily showing both parties they were fighting in the dark. Poor George Whitefield! how much to be pitied, who exhausted himself with incredible labours, and endured a storm of persecution, in communicating religious instruction to people, who were already furnished with more than ten thousand preachers of the gospel! To be serious, however, on a subject which, if there be one in the world, demands seriousness,—it is an incontrovertible fact, that the doctrines of the reformation are no longer heard in the greater part of the established pulpits, and that there has been a general departure from the truths of the gospel, which are exhibited in the ministry of a small though increasing minority of the Clergy. The author *knows* this to be a fact, although he has the meanness to express himself in a manner that would imply his being of a contrary opinion. We wish him all the consolation he can derive from this trait of godly simplicity; as well as from his reflection on the effect which his flattery is likely to produce, in awakening the vigilance and improving the character of his newly-discovered race of Gospel ministers.—With respect to the degree in which an unfavourable opinion of the Clergy is to be ascribed to the representations of the evangelical party, we have to remark, that they possess too much attachment to their order to delight in depreciating it; and that

they are under no temptation to attempt it with a view to secure the preference of their hearers, who, supposing them to have derived benefit from their labours, will be sufficiently aware of the difference between light and darkness, between famine and plenty. Were they to insinuate, with this author, that all their clerical brethren are actually engaged in the same cause and are promoting the same object with themselves, they would at once be charged with a violation of truth, and be considered as insulting the common sense of the public.

The author is extremely offended at Dr. Haweis, on account of the following passage in his 'History of the Church of Christ.' "Different itinerant societies have been established in order to send instruction to the poor, in the villages where the gospel is not preached. Probably not less than five hundred places of divine worship have been opened within the last three years." Dr. Haweis, in making this representation, undoubtedly conceived himself to be stating a simple fact, without suspecting any lover of the gospel would call it in question. The author's comment upon it is curious enough. 'It would be scarcely credible,' he says, 'were not the time and place marked with sufficient precision, that a clergyman, beneficed in the Church of England, was describing, in the foregoing passage, something which had lately been taking place in this country!' It is surely very credible that there are five hundred places in England where the gospel is not preached; the incredible part of the business, then, consists in a 'beneficed clergyman' daring to assert it, who, according to the author, is a sort of personage who is bound never to utter a truth that will offend the delicate ears of the Clergy, especially on so trivial an occasion as that of describing the state of religion in En-

gland. What magnanimity of spirit, and how far is this author from the suspicion of being a man-pleaser !

After acknowledging that the ministers he is characterising have been *unjustly* charged with infringing on canonical regularity, he adds,

‘Would it were as easy to defend them *universally** against those who accuse them of vanity, of courting popularity, of effrontery, of coarseness, of the want of that affectionate spirit which should breathe through all the ministrations of a Christian teacher, of their commonly appearing before a congregation with an objurgatory aspect, as if their minds were always brooding over some matter of accusation against their charge, instead of their feeling toward them as a father does toward his children.’ p. 157.

The reader has in this passage a tolerable specimen of the ‘vanity’ and ‘effrontery’ of this writer, as well as of that ‘objurgatory aspect’ he has thought fit to assume toward his brethren, not without strong suspicion of assuming it from a desire to ‘court popularity.’ It would be a mere waste of words to attempt to reply to such an accusation, which merits attention on no other account than its exhibiting a true picture of his mind.

‘As for the matter,’ he proceeds to observe, ‘of which the sermons delivered by some of them are composed, it is contemptible in the extreme. Though truths of great importance are brought forward, yet, as if those who delivered them were born to ruin the cause in which they are engaged, they are presented to the auditory, associated with such meanness, imbecility, or absurdity, as to afford a complete triumph to those who are adverse to their propagation. We are disgusted by the violation of all the rules, which the common sense of mankind teaches them to expect the observance of, on the occasion. It is true, indeed, that something is heard about Christ, about faith and repentance, about sin and grace ; but in vain we look for argument, or persuasion, or suavity, or reverential demeanour ; qualities which ought never to be absent, where it is of the utmost importance, that the judgment be convinced, and the affections gained.’ p. 158.

Unfair and illiberal in the extreme, as this representation is, it contains an important concession,—that

* The word *universally*, marked in italics, was inserted after the first edition.

the lowest preachers among them have the wisdom to make a right selection of topics, and to bring forward truths of great importance ; a circumstance sufficient of itself to give them an infinite superiority over the 'apes of Epictetus.*' A great diversity of talents must be expected to be found amongst them ; but it has not been our lot to hear of any, whose labours a good man would think it right to treat with indiscriminate contempt. As they are called, for the most part, to address the middle and lower classes of society, their language is plain and simple ; speaking in the presence of God, their address is solemn ; and, as becomes 'the ambassadors of Christ,' their appeals to the conscience are close and cogent. Few, if any, among them, aspire to the praise of consummate orators : a character which we despair of ever seeing associated, in high perfection, with that of a Christian teacher. The minister of the gospel is called to declare the testimony of God, which is always weakened by a profuse employment of the ornaments of secular eloquence. Those exquisite paintings and nice touches of art, in which the sermons of the French preachers excel so much, excite a kind of attention, and produce a species of pleasure, not in perfect accordance with devotional feeling. The imagination is too much excited and employed, not to interfere with the more awful functions of conscience ; the hearer is absorbed in admiration, and the exercise which ought to be an instrument of conviction becomes a feast of taste. In the hand of a Massillon, the subject of death itself is blended with so many associations of the most delicate kind, and calls up so many sentiments of natural tenderness, as to become a source of theatrical amusement, rather than of religious sensibility. Without being insensible to the charms of eloquence, it is our decided opinion that a

* Horsley.

sermon of Mr. Gisborne's is more calculated to 'convert a sinner from the error of his way,' than one of Massillon's. It is a strong objection to a studied attempt at oratory in the pulpit, that it usually induces a neglect of the peculiar doctrines of Christian verity, where the preacher feels himself restrained, and is under the necessity of explaining texts, of obviating objections, and elucidating difficulties, which limits the excursions of imagination, and confines it within narrow bounds. He is therefore eager to escape from these fetters; and, instead of '*reasoning out of the Scriptures*,' expatiates in the flowery fields of declamation. It would be strange, however, if the evangelical clergy did not excel their contemporaries in the art of preaching, to which they devote so much more of their attention. While others are accustomed to describe it under the very appropriate phrase of 'doing duty,' it is their business and their delight. They engage in it under many advantages. Possessed of the same education with their brethren, they usually speak to crowded auditories; the truths they deliver command attention, and they are accustomed to ascend the pulpit under an awful sense of the weight and importance of their charge. Under such circumstances, it is next to impossible for them not to become powerful and impressive. Were it not indelicate to mention names, we could easily confirm our observations by numerous living examples. Suffice it to say, that perhaps no denomination of Christians ever produced so many excellent preachers; and that it is entirely owing to them, that the ordinance of preaching has not fallen, in the established church, into utter contempt.

With respect to the remarks the author makes on the 'hypochondriacal cast of preaching heard among them,' of their 'holding their hearers by details of conflicts and experiences,' and of their '*prosings* on the hidings

of God's face,** we need not detain our readers. To good men it will be matter of serious regret, to find a writer, from whom different things were to be expected, treat the concerns of the spiritual warfare in so light and ludicrous a manner; while the irreligious will heartily join in the laugh. It should be remembered that he is performing quarantine, purging himself from the suspicion of *Methodism*, and that nothing can answer this purpose so well as a spice of profaneness.

After expressing his contempt of the evangelical clergy as *preachers*, he proceeds to characterise them in the following manner as *writers*.

'Here,' says he, 'I can with great truth affirm, that many included in that description of clergymen now under consideration, are sorely grieved, by much of what comes out as the produce of authorship on their side. And well they may be; to see, as is frequently the case, the blessed truths of the gospel degraded, by being associated with newspaper bombast, with impudence, with invective, with dotage, with drivelling cant, with buffoonery, and scurrility! Who can read these despicable publications, without thinking contemptuously of all who abet them? But let not every one, in whom an occasional coincidence of opinion may be recognized, be included in this number. For it is a certain truth, that the writings of avowed infidels are not more offensive to several of the clergy in question, than are some of the publications here alluded to. Let them not therefore be judged of, by that which they condemn;—by productions, which they consider as an abuse of the liberty of the press, and a disgrace to the cause which their authors profess to serve.' p. 179.

Whoever remembers that the most learned interpreter of prophecy now living ranks with the evangelical clergy, whoever recalls to his recollection the names of Scott, Robinson, Gisborne, and a multitude of others of the same description, will not easily be induced to form a contemptuous opinion of their literary talents, or to suspect them of being a whit behind the rest of the clergy in mental cultivation or intellectual vigour.

* In the second edition, the author has changed the term '*pro-sings*,' into '*discoursings*.'

In a subsequent edition, the author has explained his meaning, by restricting the censure to all who have ranged themselves *on the side* of the clergy under consideration. But as far as the most explicit avowal of the same tenets can indicate any thing, have not each of the respectable persons before mentioned ranged themselves on their side? Or if he will insist upon limiting the phrase to such as have defended them in controversy, what will he say of Overton, whose work, for a luminous statement of facts, an accurate arrangement of multifarious articles, and a close deduction of proofs, would do honour to the first polemic of the age? In affecting a contempt of this most able writer, he has contradicted himself, having, in another part of this work, borne a reluctant testimony to his talents. He closes his animadversions on the clergy usually styled evangelical, with the following important concessions.

'We are ready to own, though there have been a few instances to the contrary, that the moral conduct of the men in question is consistent with their calling; and that though the faults above detailed are found among them, yet that as a body they are more than free from immoralities.' p. 162.

The men to whom their accuser ascribes an assemblage of virtues so rare and so important, must unquestionably be 'the excellent of the earth,' and deserve a very different treatment from what they have received at his hands.

Before we put a final period to this article, we must beg the reader's patience to a few remarks on the general tendency of the work under examination.

For the freedom of censure the author has assumed, he cannot plead the privilege of reproof. He has violated every law by which it is regulated. In administering reproof, we are not wont to call in a third party, least of all the party to whom the persons reprov'd are directly opposed. Besides, if reproof is intended

to have any effect, it must be accompanied with the indications of a friendly mind ; since none ever succeeded in reclaiming the person he did not appear to love. The spirit this writer displays toward the object of his censure, is decidedly hostile ; no expressions of esteem, no attempt to conciliate ; all is rudeness, asperity, and contempt. He tells us in his preface, 'It is difficult to find an apology for disrespectful language under any circumstances ; if it can be at all excused, it is when he who utters, lets us know from whence it comes ; but he who dares to use it, and yet dares not put his name to the abuse, give us reason to conclude that his cowardice is equal to his insolence.' (Pref. p. iv.) In violation of his own canon, he seems to have assumed a disguise for the very purpose of giving an unbridled indulgence to the insolence he condemns.

If we consider him in the light of a public Censor, he will appear to have equally neglected the proprieties of that character. He, who undertakes that office, ought, in all reason, to direct his chief attention to vice and impiety ; which, as the common foes of human nature, give every one the privilege of attack. Though his subject naturally led him to it, we find little or nothing of the kind. In his eagerness to expose the aberrations of goodness, the most deadly sins and the most destructive errors are scarcely noticed. In surveying the state of morals, the eccentricities of a pious zeal, a hair-breadth deviation from ecclesiastical etiquette, a momentary feeling of tenderness towards Dissenters, are the things which excite his indignation ; while the secularity, the indolence, the ambition, and dissipation, too prevalent in the church, almost escape his observation. We do not mean to assert, that it is always improper to animadvert on the errors of good men ; we are convinced of the contrary. But, whenever it is attempted, it ought to be accompanied with such ex-

pressions of tenderness and esteem, as shall mark our sense of their superiority to persons of an opposite description. In the moral delineations with which the New Testament abounds, when the imperfections of Christians are faithfully reprehended, we are never tempted to lose sight of the infinite disparity betwixt the friends and the enemies of the gospel. Our reverence for good men is not impaired by contemplating their infirmities: while those who are strangers to vital religion, with whatever amiable qualities they may be invested, appear objects of pity. The impression made by the present performance is just the reverse. The character of the unquestionably good is placed in so invidious a light on the one hand, and the bad qualities of their opponents so artfully disguised and extenuated on the other, that the reader feels himself at a loss which to prefer. Its obvious tendency is to obliterate every distinctive mark and characteristic, by which genuine religion is ascertained.

The writer of this work cannot have intended the reformation of the party on which he has animadverted; for, independently of his having, by the rudeness of his attack, forfeited every claim to their esteem, he has so conducted it, that there is not one in fifty guilty of the faults he has laid to their charge. Instead of being induced to alter their conduct, they can only feel for him those sentiments which unfounded calumny is apt to inspire. The very persons to whom his censures apply, will be more likely to feel their resentment rise at the bitterness and rancour which accompanies them, than to profit by his admonitions.

As we are fully convinced that the controversy agitated between the evangelical party and their opponents, involves the essential interests of the gospel, and whatever renders Christianity worth contending for, we cannot but look with jealousy on the person who offers

himself as an umpire ; especially when we perceive a leaning towards the party which we consider in the wrong. This partiality may be traced almost through every page of the present work. Were we to look only to speculative points, we might be tempted to think otherwise. It is not, however, in the cool argumentative parts of a work, that the bias of an author is so much to be perceived, as in the declamatory parts when he gives a freer scope to his feelings. It is in the choice of the epithets applied to the respective parties, in the expression of contemptuous or respectful feeling, in the solicitude apparent to please the one, combined with his carelessness of offending the other, that he betrays the state of his heart. Judged by this criterion, this author must be pronounced an *enemy* to the evangelical party. We hope this unnatural alienation from the servants of Christ will not prove contagious, or it will soon completely overthrow that reformation which the established church has experienced within the last fifty years.

When Samson was brought into the house of Dagon to make sport for the Philistines, it was by the Philistines themselves : had it been done by an Israelite, it would have betrayed a blindness much more deplorable than that of Samson. Great as were the irregularities and disorders which deformed the church at Corinth, and severely as they were reprehended, it is easy to conceive, but impossible to express the indignation Paul would have felt, had a Christian held up those disorders to the view and the derision of the heathen world. It is well known that the conduct of Luther, of Carlostadt, and of many other reformers, furnished matter of merited censure, and even of plausible invective ; but he who had employed himself in emblazoning and magnifying their faults, would have been deemed a foe to the Reformation. Aware that

it will be replied to this, the cases are different, and neither the truth of Christianity nor the doctrines of the Reformation are involved in the issue of the present controversy, we answer, without hesitation, that the controversy now on foot *does* involve nearly all that renders it important for Christianity to be true, and most precisely the doctrines of the Reformation, to which the papists are not more inimical, (in some points they are less so) than the opponents of the evangelical clergy. It is the old enmity to the gospel, under a new form ; an enmity as deadly and inveterate, as that which animated the breast of Porphyry or of Julian.

The impression of character on the public mind, is closely connected with that of principles ; so that, in the mixed questions more especially which regard religion and morals, it is vain to expect men will condescend to be instructed by those whom they are taught to despise. Let it be generally supposed that the patrons of orthodox piety are weak, ignorant, and enthusiastic, despicable as a body, with the exception of a few individuals ; after being inured to such representations from their enemies, let the public be told this by one who was formerly their friend and associate,—and is it possible to conceive a circumstance more calculated to obstruct the efficacy of their principles ? Will the prejudices of an irreligious world against the gospel be mitigated, by being inspired with contempt for its abettors ? Will it be won to the love of piety, by being schooled in the scorn and derision of its most serious professors ?

We can readily suppose, that, stung with the reproaches cast upon his party, he is weary of bearing the cross : if this be the case, let him at once renounce his principles, and not attempt, by mean concessions and a temporising policy, to form an impracticable coalition betwixt the world and the church. We appre-

hend the ground he has taken is untenable, and that he will be likely to please neither party. By the friends of the gospel he will be in danger of being shunned as an 'accuser of the brethren;' while his new associates regard him with the contempt due to a sycophant.

It must give the enlightened friends of religion concern, to witness a spirit gaining ground amongst us, which, to speak of it in the most favourable terms, is calculated to sow the seeds of discord. The vivid attention to moral discrimination, the vigilance which seizes on what is deemed reprehensible, is unhappily turned to the supposed failings of good men, much to the satisfaction, no doubt, of an ungodly world. The practice of caricaturing the most illustrious men has grown fashionable amongst us. With grief and indignation we lately witnessed an attempt of this kind on the character of Mr. Whitefield, made, if our information be correct, by the present author; in which every shade of imperfection, which tradition can supply, or ingenuity surmise, is industriously brought forward for the purpose of sinking him in public estimation. Did it accomplish the object intended by it? It certainly did not. While the prejudice entertained against Whitefield, by the enemies of religion, was already too violent to admit of increase, its friends were perfectly astonished at the littleness of soul, and the callousness to every kind feeling, which could delight in mangling such a character. It was his misfortune to mingle freely with different denominations, to preach in unconsecrated places, and convert souls at uncanonical hours; whether he acted right or wrong in these particulars, it is not our province to inquire. That he approved himself to his own conscience, there is not the least room to doubt. Admitting his conduct, in the instances alluded to, to have been inconsistent with his clerical engagements, let it be temperately censured; but let

it not efface from our recollection the patient self-denial, the inextinguishable ardour, the incredible labours, and the unexampled success, of that extraordinary man. The most zealous votaries of the church need be under no apprehension of her being often disgraced by producing such a man as Mr. Whitefield. *Nil admirari*, is an excellent maxim, when applied, as Horace intended it, to the goods of fortune: when extended to character, nothing can be more injurious. A sensibility to the impression of great virtues, bordering on enthusiasm, accompanied with a generous oblivion of the little imperfections with which they are joined, is one of the surest prognostics of excellence.

Verum, ubi plura nitent—non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura—

The modern restorers of the piety of the Church of England were eminent for their godly simplicity and fidelity. Sincerely attached, as it became them, to the establishment of which they were ministers, their spirit was too enlarged, too ardent, too disinterested, to suffer them to become the tools of a party, or to confound the interests of Christianity with those of any external communion. From their being looked upon as innovators, as well as from the paucity of their numbers, they were called to endure a much severer trial than falls to the lot of their successors. They bore the burden and heat of the day; they laboured, and others have entered into their labours. We feel, with respect to the greater part of those who succeed them, a confidence that they will continue to tread in their steps. But we cannot dissemble our concern, at perceiving a set of men rising up among them, ambitious of new-modelling the party; who, if they have too much virtue openly to renounce their principles, yet

have too little firmness to endure the consequences : timid, temporising spirits, who would refine into insipidity, polish into weakness, and, under we know not what pretences of regularity, moderation, and a care not to offend, rob it utterly of that energy of character to which it owes its success. If they learn, from this and other writers of a similar description, to insult their brethren, fawn upon their enemies, and abuse their defenders, they will soon be frittered to pieces ; they will become 'like other men,' feeble, enervated, and shorn of their strength. We would adjure them to be on their guard against the machinations of this new sect. We cannot suspect them of the meanness of submitting to be drilled by their enemies, whom they are invited to approach in the attitude of culprits, beseeching them, (in our author's phrase) to 'inquire whether there may not be some found among them of unexceptionable character !' We trust they will treat such a suggestion with ineffable contempt.

After the taste our readers have had of this writer's spirit, they will not be surprised at his entire disapprobation of Mr. Overton's work. The discordance of sentiment must be great, betwixt him who wishes to betray, and him whose aim is to defend. Mr. Overton, in behalf of his brethren, boldly appeals from their accusers, to the public ; this writer crouches to those very accusers, approaches them in a supplicating tone, and, as the price of peace, offers the heads of his brethren in a charger. Overton, by a copious detail of facts, and by a series of irrefragable arguments, establishes their innocence ; this writer assents to their condemnation, entreating only that execution may be respited till an inquiry is made into the degrees of delinquency. The author of *The True Churchman Ascertained* clothes himself with the light of truth ; the author of

Zeal without Innovation hides himself in the thickest gloom of equivocation.

Before we close this article, we must entreat our reader's patience while we make one observation relating to the permanence of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is possible the dignitaries of the church may be at a loss to decide whether the services of the evangelical class shall be accepted or rejected; but we are persuaded the people will feel no difficulty, in determining whether to continue their attendance at the places from whence they are banished. Teachers of the opposite description have already lost their hold on the public mind; and they will lose it more and more. Should the secession from the established church become so general, as that its services are no longer the objects of popular suffrage, it will be deprived of its firmest support. For the author of the '*Alliance*' acknowledges, that the compact betwixt church and state, which he allows to be a virtual rather than a formal one, mainly rests upon the circumstance of the established religion being that of the majority; without which it becomes incapable of rendering those services to the state, for the sake of which its privileges and emoluments were conferred. Nothing but an extreme infatuation can accelerate such an event. But if pious and orthodox men be prevented from entering into the church, or compelled to retire from it, the people will retire with them; and the apprehension of the church being in danger, which has so often been the watchword of party, will become for once well founded.

REVIEW.

*SERMONS, principally designed to illustrate and to enforce
Christian Morality.* By the Rev. T. GISBORNE, A. M.
8vo. pp. 430.

WE have read these sermons with so much satisfaction, that were it in our power to aid their circulation by any testimony of our approbation, we should be almost at a loss for terms sufficiently strong and emphatic. Though the excellent author is possessed already of a large share of the public esteem, we are persuaded these discourses will make a great accession to his celebrity. Less distinguished by any predominant quality, than by an assemblage of the chief excellencies in the pulpit composition, they turn on subjects not very commonly handled, and discuss them with a copiousness, delicacy, and force, which evince the powers of a master. They are almost entirely upon moral subjects, yet equally remote from the superficiality and dryness with which these subjects are too often treated. The morality of Mr. Gisborne is arrayed in all the majesty of truth, and all the beauties of holiness. In perusing these sermons, the reader is continually reminded of real life, and beholds human nature under its most unsophisticated aspect, without ever being tempted to suppose himself in the schools of pagan philosophy. We cannot better explain the professed

scope and object of the author, than by copying a few sentences from his preface.

Of late years it has been loudly asserted that, among clergymen who have shewed themselves very earnest in doctrinal points, adequate regard has not been evinced to moral instruction. The charge has perhaps been urged with the greatest vehemence by persons, who have employed little trouble in examining into its truth. In many cases, it has been groundless; in many, exaggerated. In some instances there has been reason, I fear, for a degree of complaint; and in more, a colourable pretext for the imputation. I believe that some preachers, shocked on beholding examples, real or supposed, of congregations starving on mere morality substituted for the bread of life; eager to lay broad and deep the foundations of the gospel; and ultimately apprehensive lest their own hearers should suspect them of reverting towards *legality*; have not given to morals, as fruits of faith, the station and the amplitude to which they have a scriptural claim. Anxious lest others should mistake, or lest they should themselves be deemed to mistake, the branch for the root: not satisfied with proclaiming to the branch, as they were bound habitually to proclaim, *Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee*: they have shrunk from the needful office of tracing the ramifications. They have not left morality out of their discourses. But they have kept it too much in the back ground. They have noticed it shortly, generally, incidentally; in a manner which, while perhaps they were eminent as private patterns of moral duties, might not sufficiently guard an unwary hearer against a reduced estimate of practical holiness, nor exempt themselves from the suspicion of undervaluing moral obedience. pref. pp. vii, viii.

To the truth of these remarks we cordially assent, as they point to a defect in the ministrations of some excellent men, which the judicious part of the public have long lamented, and which Mr. Gisborne, in his present work, has taught his contemporaries how to remedy. Extremes naturally lead to each other. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel had been so long neglected by the most celebrated preachers, and the pernicious consequences of that neglect, in wearing out every trace of genuine religion, had been so deeply felt, that it is not to be wondered at if the first attempts to correct the evil were accompanied with a tendency to the contrary extreme. In many situations, those who

attempted to revive doctrines which had long been considered as obsolete, found themselves much in the same circumstances as missionaries, having intelligence to impart before unknown, and exposed to all the contempt and obloquy which assailed the first preachers of Christianity. While they were engaged in such an undertaking, it is not at all surprising that they confined their attention almost entirely to the doctrines peculiar to the Christian religion, with less care to inculcate and display the moral precepts which it includes in common with other systems than their intrinsic importance demanded. They were too much occupied in removing the rubbish and laying the foundations, to permit them to carry the superstructure very high. They insisted in general terms on the performance of moral duties, urged the necessity of that holiness without which 'none shall see the Lord,' and, by a forcible application of truth to the conscience, produced in many instances the most surprising, as well as the most happy effects. But still, in consequence of limiting their ministry too much to the first elements of the gospel, and dwelling chiefly on topics calculated to alarm the careless and console the faithful, a wrong taste began to prevail amongst their hearers; a disrelish of moral discussions, a propensity to contemplate Christianity under one aspect alone, that of a system of relief for the guilty, instead of a continual discipline of the heart. Those wished for stimulants and cordials, whose situation required alteratives and correctives. Preachers and hearers have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the fear of being reproached as '*legal*,' deterred some good men from insisting so much on moral and practical subjects as their own good sense would have dictated. By this means the malady became more inveterate, till the inherent corruption of human nature converted the doctrine of the

gospel in a greater or less degree into the leaven of antinomianism. An error, which at first appeared trivial, at length proved serious; and thus it came to pass that the fabric of sacred truth was almost universally reared in such a manner, as to deviate sensibly from the primitive model.

When we look at Christianity in the New Testament, we see a set of discoveries, promises, and precepts, adapted to influence the whole character; it presents an object of incessant solicitude, in the pursuit of which new efforts are to be exerted, and new victories accomplished, in a continued course of well doing, till we reach the heavenly mansions. There is scarce a spring in the human frame and constitution it is not calculated to touch, nor any portion of human agency which is exempted from its control. Its resources are inexhaustible; and the considerations by which it challenges attention, embrace whatever is most awful or alluring in the whole range of possible existence. Instead of being allowed to repose on his past attainments, or to flatter himself with the hope of success without the exercise of diligence and watchfulness, the Christian is commanded to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. In the *actual* exhibition of religion, the solicitude of serious minds has been made to turn too much on a particular crisis, which has been presented in a manner so insulated, that nothing in the order of means seemed instrumental to its production. In short, things have been represented in such a manner, as was too apt to produce despondency before conversion, and presumption after it.

It must be allowed, the judicious management of practical subjects, is more difficult than the discussion of doctrinal points; which may also account, in part, for the prevalence of the evil we are now speaking of.

In treating a point of doctrine, the habit of belief almost supersedes the necessity of proof: the mind of the hearer is usually pre-occupied in favour of the conclusions to be established; nor is much address or ingenuity necessary to conduct him in a path in which he has long been accustomed to tread. The materials are prepared to the preacher's hands; a set of texts with their received interpretations stand ready for his use; the compass of thought which is required is very limited, and this little circle has been beaten so often, that an ordinary understanding moves through it with mechanical facility. To discuss a doctrinal position to the satisfaction of a common audience, requires the smallest possible exertion of intellect. The tritest arguments are in fact the best: the most powerful considerations to enforce assent are rendered by that very quality the most conspicuous, as the sun announces himself by his superior splendor. In delineating the duties of life, the task is very different. To render these topics interesting, it is necessary to look abroad, to contemplate the principles of human nature, and the diversified modes of human feeling and action. The preacher has not to do with a few rigid and unbending propositions; he is to contemplate and portray a real state of things, a state which is continually changing its aspect while it preserves its essential character, and the particulars of which mock the powers of enumeration. If he does not think with great originality, he must at least think for himself: he must use his own eyes, though he may report nothing but what has been observed before. As there lies an appeal, on these occasions, to the unbiassed good sense and observation of unlettered minds, the deficiencies of an injudicious instructor are sure to be detected. His principles will fail of interesting for want of exemplification; or his details will be devoid of dignity, and

his delineations of human life disgust by their deviation from nature and from truth.

In points of casuistry, difficulties will occur which can only be solved and disentangled by nice discrimination, combined with extensive knowledge. The general precepts, for example, of justice and humanity, may be faithfully inculcated, and earnestly insisted on, without affording a ray of useful direction to a doubting conscience. While all men acknowledge the indispensable obligation of these precepts, it is not always easy to discover what is the precise line of action they enforce. In the application of general rules to particular cases of conduct, many relations must be surveyed, opposing claims must be reconciled and adjusted, and the comparative value of different species of virtue established upon just and solid principles.

These difficulties have been evaded, rather than overcome, by the greater part of moralizing preachers; who have contented themselves with retailing extracts from the works of their celebrated predecessors, or with throwing together a few loose and undigested thoughts on a moral duty, without order and arrangement, or the smallest effort to impress its obligation upon the conscience, or to deduce it from its proper sources. To the total want of unction, to the cold, pagan, antichristian cast of these compositions, joined to their extreme superficiality, must be ascribed, in a great measure, the disgust which many serious minds have contracted against the introduction of moral topics into the pulpit. Our readers will not suspect we mean to apply this censure indiscriminately, or that we are insensible to the extraordinary merits of a Barrow or of a Tillotson, who have cultivated Christian morals with so universal an applause of the English public. We admire, as much as it is possible for our readers to admire, the rich invention, the masculine sense, the

exuberantly copious, yet precise and energetic diction, which distinguish the first of these writers, who by a rare felicity of genius united in himself the most distinguishing qualities of the mathematician and of the orator. We are astonished at perceiving in the same person, and in the same composition, the close logic of Aristotle, combined with the amplifying powers of Plato. The candour, the good sense, the natural arrangement, the unpremeditated graces of Tillotson, if they excite less admiration, give us almost equal pleasure. It is indeed the peculiar boast of the English nation, to have produced a set of divines, who, being equally acquainted with classical antiquity and inspired writ, and capable of joining, to the deepest results of unassisted reason, the advantages of a superior illumination, have delivered down to posterity a body of moral instruction, more pure, copious, and exact, than subsists amongst any other people; and had they appealed more frequently to the peculiar principles of the gospel, had they infused a more evangelical spirit into their discourses, instead of representing Christianity too much as a mere code of morals, they would have left us nothing to wish or to regret. Their decision of moral questions was for the most part unquestionably just; but they contemplated moral duties too much apart, neglecting to blend them sufficiently with the motives and principles of pure revelation, after the manner of the inspired writers; and, supposing them to believe, they forgot to inculcate, the fundamental truth—that *'by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified.'* Those internal dispositions, whence right conduct can alone flow, were too little insisted on; the agency of the Spirit was not sufficiently honoured or acknowledged; and the subordination of the duties of the second, to those of the first table, not enough kept in view. The virtues they recommended and enforce-

ed, were too often considered as the native growth of the human heart, instead of being represented as '*fruits of the Spirit*.' Jesus Christ was not laid as the foundation of morality; and a very sparing use was made of the motives to its practice deduced from his promises, his example, and his sacrifice. Add to this, that the labours of these great men were employed almost entirely in illustrating and enforcing the obligation of particular duties, while the doctrine of the cross engaged little of their attention, except as far as it was impugned by the objections of infidels, or mutilated by the sophistry of papists. From the perusal of their writings, the impression naturally results, that a belief of the evidences of revealed religion, joined to a correct deportment in social life, is adequate to all the demands of Christianity. For these reasons, much as we admire, we cannot recommend them in an unqualified manner, nor consider them as safe guides in religion.

By these remarks, we intend no offence to any class of Christians. That the celebrated authors we have mentioned, with others of a similar stamp, have refined the style, and improved the taste, of the English pulpit, while they have poured a copious stream of knowledge on the public mind, we are as ready to acknowledge as their warmest admirers; but we will not disguise our conviction, that, for the just delineation of the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' we must look to the Baxters, the Howes, and the Ushers, of an earlier period. He who wishes to catch the flame of devotion, by listening to the words 'which are spirit and are life,' will have recourse to the writings of the latter, notwithstanding their intricacy of method, and prolixity of style.

It is with peculiar satisfaction we call the attention of our readers to a work, which unites, in a considerable degree, the excellencies of each class of divines

alluded to, without their defects. The discourses are on the following subjects. Our Lord Jesus Christ the Foundation of Morality ; on the Evils resulting from False Principles of Morality ; on the Changes produced by the coming of Christ in the Situation of Men as to the Divine Law ; Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality ; on Living after the Flesh or after the Spirit ; the Love of God an Inducement to strict Morality ; on Brotherly Love ; on the Love of Money ; on the Sacrifice of Worldly Interest to Duty ; on Christian Bounty ; on Discontent ; on Worldly Anxiety ; on Christian Obedience to Civil Rulers ; Christian Patriotism illustrated by the Character of Nehemiah ; on quiet Diligence in our Proper Concerns ; on Partiality ; on Suspicion ; on doing Evil to produce good ; on the Superiority of Moral Conduct required of Christians. The reader will perceive it was not the author's design to make a systematic arrangement of Christian duties, and that there are many vices and virtues not comprehended within the plan of his present work. In the discussion of the subjects which he has selected, he has evinced much observation of human life, a deep insight into the true principles of morals, and intimate acquaintance with the genius of the Christian religion. He has erected his edifice upon a solid basis ; in the choice of his materials he has carefully excluded the wood, hay, and stubble ; and admitted no ornaments but such as are fitted to grace the temple of God.

The intelligent reader will discover, in these discourses, the advantage resulting from studying morality as a science. It will yield him great satisfaction to find the writer ascending on all occasions to first principles, forming his decisions on comprehensive views, separating what is specious from what is solid, and enforcing morality by no motives which are suspicious or equivocal. He will not see vanity or ambition pressed

into the service of virtue, or any approach to the adoption of that dangerous policy which proposes to expel one vice by encouraging another. He will meet with no flattering encomiums on the purity and dignity of our nature, none of those appeals to the innate goodness of the human heart, which are either utterly ineffectual, or, if they restrain from open profligacy, diffuse, at the same time, the more subtile poison of pride and self-righteousness. Mr. Gisborne never confounds the functions of morality with the offices of the Saviour, nor ascribes to human virtue, polluted and imperfect at best, any part of those transcendent effects, which the New Testament teaches us to impute to the mediation of Christ. He considers the whole compass of moral duties as branches of religion, as prescribed by the will of God, and no farther acceptable to him than as they proceed from religious motives.

The disposition in mankind to seek justification by the works of the law, has been so much flattered and encouraged by the light in which moral duties have been usually placed, that Mr. Gisborne has shown his judgment by counteracting this error at the outset. We recommend to the serious attention of our readers, with this view, the fourth sermon, on Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality. We have never seen a publication, in which that important argument is set in a more clear and convincing light.

Though Mr. Gisborne for a series of years has distinguished himself as the able opponent of the doctrine of expediency, yet on no occasion has he exerted more ability in this cause than in his present work. We recommend it to the thinking part of the public to forget for a moment that they are reading a sermon, and conceive themselves attending to the arguments of a sober and enlightened philosopher. To purify the sources of morals, and to detect the principles of a

theory, which enables us to err by system and be depraved by rule, is to do good of the highest sort; as he who diminishes the mass of human calamity by striking one from the list of diseases, is a greater benefactor to mankind than the physician who performs the greatest number of cures. It is in this light we look upon the labours of the present author; to whom we are more indebted than to any other individual for discrediting a doctrine, which threatens to annihilate religion, to loosen the foundation of morals, and to debase the character of the nation. We recommend to universal perusal the admirable discourse, on the Evils resulting from False Principles of Morality.

The two discourses which propose to illustrate the Character of Nehemiah, contain the most valuable instruction, adapted in particular to the use of those who occupy the higher ranks, or who possess stations of commanding influence and authority. It evinces just and enlarged views of the duties attached to elevated situations, and breathes the purest spirit of Christian benevolence. The sermon on the Love of Money displays, perhaps, the most of the powers of the orator, and demonstrates in how masterly a manner the author is capable, when he pleases, of enforcing 'the terrors of the Lord.' It contains some awful passages, in which, by a kind of repeated asseveration of the same truth, and the happy reiteration of the same words, an effect is produced resembling that of repeated claps of thunder. We shall present our readers with the following specimen.

Fourthly. Meditate on the final condition to which the lover of money is hastening. The *covetous*, the man who is under the dominion of the love of money, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. In the present life he has a foretaste of the fruits of his sin. He is restless, anxious, dissatisfied: at one time harassed by uncertainty as to the probable result of his projects; at another, soured by the failure of them; at another, disappointed in the midst of success by

discerning, too late, that the same exertions employed in some other line of advantage would have been more productive. But suppose him to have been, through life, as free from the effects of these sources of vexation as the most favourable picture could represent him. *He shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* He may not have been a miser; but he was a lover of money. He may not have been an extortioner; but he was a lover of money. He may not have been fraudulent; but he was a lover of money. *He shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* He has had his day and his object. He has sought, and he may have accumulated, earthly possessions. By their instrumentality he may have gratified many other appetites and desires. But he did not seek first the kingdom of God; therefore he shall not obtain it. *He loved the world;* therefore *he shall perish with the world.* He has wilfully bartered his soul for money. In vain is he now aghast at his former madness. In vain does he now detest the idol which he worshipped. The gate of salvation is closed against him. He inherits the bitterness of unavailing remorse, the horrors of eternal death. pp. 145, 146.

If we were called to specify the discourse in the present volume, that appeared to us the most ingenious and original, we should be inclined to point to the eighteenth, on Suspicion.

Having expressed our warm approbation of this performance, justice compels us to notice what appear to us its principal blemishes; which, however, are so overbalanced by the merit of the whole, that we should scarcely deem them worthy of remark, were it not requisite to vindicate our claim to impartiality. Against the sentiments or the arrangement of these discourses, we have nothing to object: the former are almost invariably just and important, often striking and original: the latter is natural and easy, preserving the *spirit* of method even where it may seem to neglect the forms: equally remote from the looseness of an harangue, and the ostentation of logical exactness. With the style of this work, we cannot say that we are quite so much satisfied. Perspicuous, dignified, and correct, it yet wants something more of amenity, variety, and ease. Instead of that flexibility which bends to accommodate itself to the different conceptions which occur, it pre-

serves a sort of uniform stateliness. The art of transposition, carried, in our opinion, to excess, together with the preference of learned to plain Saxon words, give it an air of Latinity, which must necessarily render it less intelligible and acceptable to unlettered minds. It is indeed but fair to remark, that the discourses appear to have been chiefly designed for the use of the higher classes. But while we allow this apology its just weight, we are still of opinion, that the composition might have assumed a more easy and natural air, without losing any thing of its force or beauty. Addresses from the pulpit should, in our apprehension, always make some approach to the character of plain and popular.

Another blemish which strikes us in this work, is the frequent use of interrogations, introduced, not only in the warm and impassioned parts, where they are graceful, but in the midst of argumentative discussion. We have been struck with the prevalence of this practice in the more recent works of clergymen, beyond those of any other order of men. With Demosthenes, we know interrogation was a very favourite figure ; but we recollect, at the same time, it was chiefly confined to the more vehement parts of his speeches ; in which, like the eruptions of a furnace, he broke out upon, and consumed his opponents. In him it was the natural expression of triumphant indignation : after he had subdued and laid them prostrate by the force of his arguments, by his abrupt and terrible interrogations he trampled them in the mire. In calm and dispassionate discussion, the frequent use of questions appear to us unnatural : it discomposes the attention by a sort of starting and irregular motion ; and is a violation of dignity by affecting to be lively, where it is sufficient praise to be cogent and convincing. In a word, when, instead of being used to give additional vehemence to a discourse, they are

interspersed in a series of arguments as an expedient for enlivening the attention, and varying the style, they have an air of undignified flippancy. We should scarcely have noticed these little circumstances in an inferior work, but we could not satisfy ourselves to let them pass without observation in an author, who, to merits of a more substantial nature, joins so many and such just pretensions to the character of a fine writer.

REVIEW.



Letter to a Friend, on the Evidences, Doctrines, and duties of the Christian Religion. By OLINTHUS GREGORY, I.L. D. Of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich.

As this is a work of no ordinary merit, and written upon a subject which all must confess to be of the last importance, we shall endeavour, after being indulged with a few preliminary remarks, to give a pretty copious analysis of its contents ; not doubting the greater part of our readers will be solicitous to avail themselves of the rich entertainment and instruction, which its perusal will unquestionably afford. The first volume is employed in the discussion of a subject which has engaged the powers of the wisest of men through a series of ages ; and minds of every size, and of every diversity of acquisition, having contributed their quota towards its elucidation, the accumulation of materials is such, that it has become more necessary, perhaps more difficult, to arrange than to invent. In the conduct of so extensive an argument, the talents of the writer will chiefly appear, in giving the due degree of relief and prominence to the different branches of the subject,—in determining what should be placed in a strong and brilliant light, and what should be more slightly sketched,—and disposing the whole in such a man-

ner as shall give it the most impressive effect. If there is little room for the display of invention, other powers are requisite, not less rare or less useful; a nice and discriminating judgment, a true logical taste, and a talent of extensive combination. An ordinary thinker feels himself lost in so wide a field; is incapable of classifying the objects it presents; and wastes his attention on such as are trite and common, instead of directing it to those which are great and interesting. If there are subjects which it is difficult to discuss for want of data to proceed upon, and, while they allure by their appearance of abstract grandeur, are soon found to lose themselves in fruitless logomachies and unmeaning subtleties, such as the greater part of the discussions on time, space, and necessary existence; there are others whose difficulty springs from an opposite cause,—from the immense variety of distinct topics and considerations involved in their discussion: of which the divine origination of Christianity is a striking specimen,—which it has become difficult to treat as it ought to be treated, merely in consequence of the variety and superabundance of its proofs.

On this account, we suspect that this great cause has been not a little injured by the injudicious conduct of a certain class of preachers and writers, who, in just despair of being able to handle a single topic of religion to advantage, for want of having paid a devout attention to the scriptures, fly like harpies to the evidences of Christianity, on which they are certain of meeting with something prepared to their hands, which they can tear, and soil, and mangle at their pleasure.

Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia fedant.

The famine, also, with which their prototypes in Virgil threatened the followers of Æneas, is not more dismal than that which prevails among their hearers. The

folly we are adverting to, did not escape the observation nor the ridicule of Swift, who remarked in his days, that the practice of mooting, on every occasion, the question of the origin of Christianity, was much more likely to unsettle the faith of the simple, than to counteract the progress of infidelity. It is dangerous to familiarize every promiscuous audience to look upon religion as a thing which yet remains to be proved,—to acquaint them with every sophism and cavil which a perverse and petulant ingenuity has found out, unaccompanied, as is too often the case, with a satisfactory answer; thus leaving the poison to operate without the antidote, in minds which ought to be strongly imbued with the principles, and awed by the sanctions of the gospel. It is degrading to the dignity of a revelation, established through a succession of ages by indubitable proofs, to be adverting every moment to the hypothesis of its being an imposture, and to be inviting every insolent sophist to wrangle with us about the title, when we should be cultivating the possession. The practice we are now censuring is productive of another inconvenience. The argument of the truth of Christianity, being an argument of accumulation, or, in other words, of that nature that the force of it results less from any separate consideration than from an almost infinite variety of circumstances, conspiring towards one point and terminating in one conclusion; this concentration of evidence is broken to pieces, when an attempt is made to present it in superficial descants,—than which nothing can be conceived better calculated to make what is great appear little, and what is ponderous, light. The trite observation that a cause is injured by the adoption of feeble arguments, rests on a basis not often considered, perhaps, by those who most readily assent to its truth. We never think of estimating the powers of the imagination on a given sub-

ject, by the actual performance of the poet ; but if he disappoint us, we immediately ascribe his failure to the poverty of his genius, without accusing his subject or his art. The regions of fiction we naturally conceive to be boundless. But when an attempt is made to convince us of the truth of a proposition respecting a matter of fact or a branch of morals, we take it for granted, that he who proposes it has made himself perfectly master of his argument, and that, as no consideration has been neglected that would favour his opinion, we shall not err in taking our impression of the cause from the defence of its advocate. If that cause happen to be such as involves the dearest interests of mankind, we need not remark how much injury it is capable of sustaining from this quarter.

Let us not be supposed, by these remarks, to comprehend within our censure, the writer, who, amidst the multifarious proofs of revelation, selects a single topic with a view to its more elaborate discussion, provided it be of such a nature that it will support an independent train of thought,—such, for example, as Paley has pursued in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, to which a peculiar value ought to be attached, as a clear addition to the body of Christian evidences. All we mean to assert is, that it is incomparably better to be silent on the evidences of Christianity, than to be perpetually advertising to them in a slight and superficial manner, and that a question so awful and momentous as that relating to the origin of the Christian religion, ought not to be debased into a trivial common place. Let it be formally discussed, at proper intervals, by such men, and such only, as are capable of bringing to it the time, talents, and information requisite to place it in a commanding attitude.—That the author of the present performance is possessed of these qualifications to a very great degree, will sufficiently appear from the analysis

we propose to give of the work, and the specimens we shall occasionally exhibit of its execution.

It is ushered in by a modest and dignified dedication to Colonel Mudge, lieutenant governor of that royal military institution, of which the author is so distinguished an ornament. The whole is cast into the form of letters to a friend ; and the first volume, we are given to understand, formed the subject of an actual correspondence. As much of the epistolary style is preserved as is consistent with the nature of a serious and protracted argument without ill-judged attempts at refreshing the attention of the reader by strokes of gaiety and humour. The mind of the writer appears to have been too deeply impressed with his theme, to admit of such excursions, the absence of which will not, we are persuaded, be felt or regretted.

Before he proceeds to state the direct proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, he shows, in a very striking manner, the absurdities which must of necessity be embraced by those who deny all pretences to revelation ; enumerating in the form of a creed, the various strange and untenable positions, which form the subject of skeptical belief. In this part of the work, that disease in the intellectual temperament of infidels is placed in a stronger and juster light than we remember to have seen it, which may not improperly be denominated the credulity of unbelievers. This representation forms the contents of the first letter.

The necessity of revelation is still more indisputably evinced, by an appeal to facts, and a survey of the opinions which prevailed among the most enlightened heathens, respecting God, moral duty, and a future state. Under each of these heads, our author has selected, with great judgment, numerous instances of the flagrant and pernicious errors entertained by the most celebrated Pagan legislators, poets, and philosophers ; suffi-

cient to demonstrate, beyond all contradiction, the inability of unassisted reason, in its most improved and perfect state, to conduct man to virtue and happiness, and the necessity, thence resulting, of superior aid. Much diligence of research, and much felicity of arrangement, are displayed in the management of this complicated topic, where the reader will find exhibited, in a condensed form, the most material facts adduced in Leland's voluminous work on this subject. All along, he holds the balance with a firm and steady hand, without betraying a disposition, either to depreciate the value of those discoveries and improvements to which reason really attained, or charging the picture of its aberrations and defects, with deeper shades than justly belong to it. The most eminent amongst the Pagans themselves, it ought to be remembered, who, having no other resource, were best acquainted with its weakness and its power, never dreamed of denying the necessity of revelation : this they asserted in the most explicit terms, and on some occasions seem to have expected and anticipated the communication of such a benefit. We make no apology for citing, from the present work, the following remarkable passage out of Plato, tending both to confirm the fact of a revelation being anticipated, and to evince, supposing nothing supernatural in the case, the divine sagacity of that great author. He says, that ' this just person, (the inspired teacher of whom he had been speaking,) must be poor and void of all qualifications, but those of virtue alone ; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproofs ; and therefore, within three or four years after he began to preach, he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last, be put to death.'* In whatever light we consider it, this must be allowed to be a most remarkable passage,—whether we regard

* *De Republica. L. II.*

it as merely the conjecture of a highly enlightened mind, or as the fruit of prophetic suggestion : nor are we aware of any absurdity in supposing that the prolific spirit scattered, on certain occasions, some seeds of truth amidst that mass of corruption and darkness which oppressed the Pagan world. The opinion we have ventured to advance, is asserted in the most positive terms in several parts of Justin Martyr's second Apology. Without pursuing this inquiry further, we shall content ourselves with remarking, that as the sufficiency of mere reason as the guide to truth never entered into the conception of Pagans, so it could never have arisen at all, but in consequence of confounding its results with the dictates of revelation, which, since its publication, has never ceased to modify the speculations, and aid the inquiries of those, who are least disposed to bow to its authority. On all questions of morality and religion, the streams of thought have flowed through channels enriched with a celestial ore, whence they have derived the tincture to which they are indebted for their rarest and most salutary qualities.

Before we dismiss this subject, we would just observe that the inefficacy of unassisted reason in religious concerns appears undeniably in two points ; the doubtful manner in which the wisest Pagans were accustomed to express themselves respecting a future state, the existence of which, Warburton is confident none of the philosophers believed ; and their proud reliance on their own virtue, which was such as left no room for repentance. Of a future state, Socrates, in the near prospect of death, is represented by Plato as expressing a hope, accompanied with the greatest uncertainty ; and with respect to the second point, the lofty confidence in their own virtue, which we have imputed to them, the language of Cicero, in one of his familiar letters, is awfully decisive. 'Nec enim dum ero, angor

ulla re, *cum omni caream culpa*; et si non ero, sensu omni carebo.' 'While I exist, I shall be troubled at nothing, since I have no fault whatever; and if I shall not exist, I shall be devoid of all feeling.*' So true is it, that life and immortality are brought to light by the Saviour, and that until he appeared, the greatest of men were equally unacquainted with their present condition, and their future prospects.

The next letter, which is the fourth in the series, is on mysteries in religion. Aware that while the prejudice against whatever is mysterious subsists, the saving truths of the gospel can find no entrance, the author has taken great, and, as far as the force of argument can operate, successful pains, to point out the weakness of the foundations on which that prejudice rests. He has shown, by a large induction of particulars, in natural religion, natural philosophy, and in pure and mixed mathematics, that with respect to each of these sciences, we arrive by infallible steps to conclusions, of which we can form no clear, determinate conceptions; and that the higher parts of mathematics especially, the science which glories in its superior light and demonstration, teem with mysteries as incomprehensible to the full, as those which demand our assent in Revelation. His skill as a mathematician, for which he has long been distinguished, serves him on this occasion to excellent purpose, by enabling him to illustrate his subject by well-selected examples from his favourite science, and by that means to prove in the most satisfactory manner that the mysterious parts of Christianity are exactly analogous to the difficulties inseparable from other branches of knowledge, not excepting those which make the justest pretensions to demonstration. We run no hazard in affirming, that rarely, if ever, have superior philosophical attainments been turned to

* Vol. I. p. 51.

a better account, or a richer offering brought from the fields of science into the temple of God. Some of his illustrations being drawn from the sublimer speculations of mathematics, must necessarily be unintelligible to ordinary readers : but many of them are plain and popular ; and he has succeeded in making the principle on which he reasons throughout, perfectly plain and perspicuous, which is this—that we are able, in a multitude of instances, to ascertain the *relations* of things, while we know little or nothing of the *nature* of the things themselves. If the distinction itself is not entirely new, the force of argument with which it is supported, and the extent to which its illustration is carried, are such as evince much original thinking. We should seriously recommend this part of the work to the perusal of the Barrister, if he were capable of understanding it ; and to all, without exception, who have been perverted by the shallow and ambiguous sophism first broached, we believe, by Dr. Foster, that where mystery begins, religion ends ;—when the fact is, that religion and mystery both begin and end together ; a portion of what is inscrutable to our faculties, being intimately and inseparably blended with its most vital and operative truths. A religion without its mysteries is a temple without its God.

Having thus marked out the ground, removed the rubbish, and made room for the foundation, our author proceeds with the skill of a master, to erect a firm and noble structure, conducting the argument for the truth of Christianity through all its stages, and commencing his labours in this part of the subject, with establishing the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred volume. As he manifestly aims at utility, not at display, we are glad to find he has availed himself of the profound and original reasoning of Hartley, which he has fortified all along with ingenious reflections of his own, and crown-

ed by an appeal to the principal testimonies of Christian and Pagan antiquity. The letter devoted to this subject is long, but not more so than the occasion demanded, and is replete with varied and extensive information. To the whole he has annexed a very accurate and particular account of the researches and discoveries of Dr. Buchanan, made during his visit to the Syrian Churches in India ; nor are we aware that there is a single consideration of moment, tending to confirm the genuineness and integrity of the scriptures in their present state, which in the course of our author's extended investigation has escaped his notice. By some he will be blamed for placing the proofs of the authenticity of the sacred records before the argument from prophecy and miracles : but we think he is right in adopting such an arrangement ; since the reasoning on this part not only stands independent of the sequel, but greatly abridges his subsequent labour, by enabling him to appeal, on every occasion, to the testimony of scripture, not indeed as inspired, but as an authentic document, that point having been previously established ; while it is in perfect unison with that solicitude he every where evinces, to imbue the mind of his readers with a serious and devotional spirit. Here is a book of a singular character, and of high antiquity, from which Christians profess to derive the whole of their information on religion,—and it comes down to us under such circumstances, that every thing relating to it is capable of being investigated, apart from the consideration of prophecies and miracles, except its claim to inspiration. Why then should not the pretensions of this book be examined at the very outset, as far as they are susceptible of an independent examination ; since the proof of its being genuine and authentic, will extend its consequences so far into the subsequent matter of discussion, as well as exert a great and salutary influence on the mind of the inquirer.

The next letter is devoted to the subject of prophecy : in which, after noticing a few of the more remarkable predictions relating to the revolutions of power and empire, he descends to a more particular investigation of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, which he arranges under three heads ; such as respect the time and place of his appearance—his character, doctrine, rejection, and final triumph—and the exact correspondence betwixt his contemptuous treatment and sufferings, and the representations of the ancient oracles. Under the last, he embraces the opportunity of rescuing the proof from the 53d chapter of Isaiah, from the cavils of the Jews, as well as from the insinuation of certain infidels, that the prophecy was written after the event : which he triumphantly refutes by an appeal to a remarkable passage in the books of Origen against Celsus. In confirming the inference from prophecy, we again meet with a judicious application of the author's mathematical skill, by which he demonstrates, from the doctrine of chances, the almost infinite improbability of the occurrence of even a small number of contingent events predicted of any one individual ; and the absolute impossibility, consequently, of accounting for the accomplishment of such numerous predictions as were accomplished in the person of the Messiah, without ascribing it to the power and wisdom of the Deity.

From the consideration of prophecy, he proceeds to the evidence from miracles, and the credibility of human testimony. He begins with stating, in few and simple terms, but with much precision, the just idea of a miracle, which, he remarks, has oftener been obscured than elucidated by definition, while the sentiments entertained by good men upon the subject have been almost uniformly correct, when they have not been en-

tangled or heated by controversy. This branch of the evidences of revelation is certainly very little indebted to the introduction of subtle refinements. In resting the evidence of the Jewish and Christian revelations on the ground of miracles, the author restricts his proposition to *uncontrolled miracles*; on the propriety of which, different judgments will probably be formed by his readers. We believe him to be right: since, admitting the limitation to be unnecessary, it is but an extreme of caution, a leaning to the safe side; for who will deny, that it is much easier to prove it to be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, to permit an *uncontrolled* miracle to be performed in support of error, than to demonstrate from a metaphysical consideration of the powers and capacities of spiritual agents of a high order, their incapacity of accomplishing what to our apprehensions must appear supernatural. The writer of this, at least, must confess for himself, he could never find any satisfaction in such speculations, not even in those of Farmer, ingenious as they are, which always appeared to him to be like advancing to an object by a circuitous and intricate path, rather than take the nearest road. But to return to the present performance. After exhibiting the most approved answers to the flimsy sophistry of Hume, intended to evince the incredibility of miracles; and corroborating them by a copious illustration of the four criteria of miraculous facts, suggested by Leslie in his admirable work, entitled, "A short Method with the Deists," he reduces the only suppositions which can be formed, respecting the miracles recorded in the New Testament, to the four following, which we shall give in the words of the author:

' Either, first, the recorded accounts of those miracles were absolute fictions, wickedly invented by some who had a wish to impose upon mankind:

'Or, secondly, Jesus did not work any true miracles; but the senses of the people were in some way or other deluded, so that they believed he really did perform miracles, when, in fact, he did not :

'Or, thirdly, that the spectators were not in any way deluded, but knew very well he wrought no miracles; yet were all, (both enemies and friends, the Jews themselves not excepted, though they daily "sought occasion against him,") united in a close confederacy, to persuade the world he wrought the most surprising things. So that while most actively circulated reports of those amazing occurrences, the rest kept their counsel, never offering to unmask the fraud, but managing the matter with so much dexterity and cunning, and such an exact harmony and correspondence, that the story of Jesus Christ's performing miracles should become current, should obtain almost universal credit, *and not a single person be able to disprove it :*

'Or, fourthly, that he did actually perform those astonishing works, and that the accounts given of them by the Christian writers in the New Testament are authentic and correct.

'He that does not adopt the last of these conclusions will find it a matter of very small consequence which of the three he chooses; for that the stories cannot be *fictions*, is evident from the reasonings of Leslie, already adduced : and it will be seen further, from a moment's consideration, that the denial of the miracles of Jesus Christ, *in any way*, leads necessarily to the admission of a series of real miracles of another kind.'

He closes this part of his disquisition with an elaborate confutation of the notion too generally admitted by the advocates of revelation, that the evidence of miraculous facts necessarily grows weaker in proportion to the distance of the time at which they were performed ; and in no part does the vigour of his understanding appear to more advantage than in his reasonings on this point, where, among many excellent, we meet with the following profound remark :

'It is only,' he observes, 'with regard to the facts recorded in the Bible, that men ever talk of the daily diminution of credibility. Who complains of a decay of evidence in relation to the actions of Alexander, Hannibal, Pompey, or Cæsar? How many fewer of the events recorded by Plutarch, or Polybius, or Livy, are believed now (on account of a diminution of evidence) than were believed by Mr. Addison, or Lord Clarendon, or Geoffrey Chaucer? We never hear persons wishing they had lived ages earlier, that they might have had better proofs that Cyrus was the conqueror of Bab-

ylon, that Darius was beaten in several battles by Alexander, that Titus destroyed Jerusalem, that Hannibal was entirely routed by Scipio, or Pompey by Julius Cæsar; though we sometimes find men of excellent and enterprising minds exclaiming, "O that I had lived and been present, when such splendid events occurred; how lively an interest should I have taken in such scenes, how much concern in their termination!" And indeed it is the frequent hearing of such exclamations that causes men to *confound weight of evidence with warmth or depth of feeling; and to lose sight of the essential difference between real evidence, or the true basis of belief in history, and the sensible impression or influence which such history may make upon the mind.*⁴

We have only to remark, before we dismiss this subject, that, whereas the evidence of facts which occurred at a distant period is usually placed under the head of *successive* evidence, this distinction, as applicable to the miracles of the Gospel, must either be rejected altogether, or admitted with a caution against being misled by the ambiguous use of words. The evidence, in this case, is not to be confounded for a moment with that of a report transmitted through successive ages to the present time, since the record which contains the miraculous facts carries us back to the apostolic age; so that, admitting its antiquity to be what it pretends, of which there is the most satisfactory evidence, the only link in the succession is that which separates the performers or spectators of the miracles from their narrators, who in the case before us, however, are frequently the same persons.

In order to give that conspicuous place which is due to the greatest and most momentous of these miracles, as well as to do justice to the independent train of proofs by which it is supported, Dr. G. has assigned a separate letter to the Resurrection of Christ, in which he has placed this great fact in the clearest light; and, to remove every shadow of hesitation arising from the minute variations in the account given of it by the

* Vide Ditton on the Resurrection. Part II. Prop. 16. Ed.

evangelists, has taken the pains to digest from their separate narratives a distinct statement of the whole transaction, which, as far as we have had time to examine it, appears very satisfactory.

To this succeeds an ample illustration of the argument for the truth of Christianity, drawn from its early and extensive propagation : where the fact is placed beyond all contradiction, by numerous and decisive testimonies, adduced from the ancient apologists and pagan writers ; the dates of the ten successive persecutions are accurately assigned ; and the most striking circumstances attending the last, in particular, are distinctly and forcibly exhibited. This forms the subject of the 9th letter, which closes with some admirable observations on the intrinsic excellence of the religion of Jesus, tending to show that it corresponds to all the characters, and fulfils all the indications, which a revelation from heaven might be expected to possess.

The remaining letters which compose this volume are employed in proving the inspiration of the Scripture, and answering various miscellaneous objections and cavils advanced against the Bible.

We proceed to notice the most important positions and reasonings contained in the second volume, which the author has devoted to a display of the doctrines and duties of Christianity. We are aware that many will suspect him of a partial and bigotted attachment to his own opinions, in consequence of the anxiety he manifests to communicate and support those views of Christianity, which, in his estimation, form its most striking peculiarity. It is plain our author considers the evidences of Christianity as entirely subservient to its doctrines ; and that he is consequently far from supposing, with some modern divines, that he has accomplished his work by proving that Christianity is a true and a genuine revelation from God. He judges it necessary

to spend some time and some labour in considering *what it is* that is true, what it is that is revealed. Were we not familiar with the fact, we should not be a little surprised at the prevalence of a contrary persuasion: we should probably think it strange, that such an anxiety should be evinced to rest the truth of Christianity on the firmest possible basis, along with such a profound indifference to every attempt to investigate its import. Some wonderful charm, it seems, is contained in a bare avowal that Christianity is a revelation from God, apart from any distinct perceptions of its truths, or any solemn advertence to its genuine scope and tendency. Embalmed and preserved like some Egyptian monarch, in the form of a venerable and antiquated document, it is to be carefully kept, and always approached with respect, but never allowed to take its place among the living, nor supposed to be useful to mankind according to any known law of operation. The most magnificent appellations are applied to it,—it is the light of the world, the true riches, the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price: all these, and a thousand other encomiums, are lavished on the scriptures by men, who at the same time feel no scruple in insinuating that this boasted communication from heaven contains no truths beyond the limits of reason, and that what the bulk of Christians in our ages have deemed such, are the distempered visions of enthusiasm, if they are not, in some instances, to be ascribed to the erroneous conceptions entertained by the Apostles of the religion they were appointed to propagate. It is the *possession* of a revelation, not the *use*, which these men are accustomed to contemplate and to value. As the miser conceives himself rich by the treasure which he never employs, so the persons to whom we allude, suppose themselves enlightened by a book from which they profess to derive no information, and saved by a religion which is

allowed to engage little or none of their attention. This is one of the most distinguished features in the character of those, who with exemplary modesty style themselves *rational* Christians. In this spirit, a distinguished prelate of the present age* has published a collection of tracts for the benefit of the junior clergy, in which not a single treatise is admitted, which professes to exhibit a view of Christian doctrine; and has introduced it with a preface, ingeniously calculated, under pretence of decrying dogmas, to bring all such inquiries into contempt. It certainly is not difficult to perceive whence this manner of thinking proceeds, nor whither it tends. It proceeds from a rooted aversion to the genuine truths of revelation; and had it not received a timely check, would have terminated in the general prevalence of skepticism. It presents a neutral ground, on which professed Christians and infidels may meet, and proceed to assail with their joint force the substantial truths of our religion. There is nothing in such views of Christianity to appal the infidel; nothing to mortify the pride, nothing to check or control the exorbitances, of that "carnal mind" which is "enmity against God." In stripping the religion of Christ of all that is spiritual, it renders it weak and inefficacious as an instrument of renovating the mind; and by fostering its pride, and sparing its corruption, prepares it for shaking off the restraints of religion altogether. It gives us, however, unfeigned satisfaction to perceive, that the evil we so much deprecate, appears to have met with a fatal check; and that the present times are distinguished by two things, which we cannot but consider as most favourable prognostics,—an increased attention to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and a growing unanimity with respect to the modes in which those doctrines are entertained. There is less disposi-

* Bishop Watson.

tion on the one hand to receive for Christianity a system of Pagan ethics, and on the other to confound points of doubtful speculation with its fundamental doctrines. The religious zeal of the present day is more noble and catholic than in former times, partaking less of the acrimony of party, and more of the inspiration of truth and charity. The line of demarcation betwixt sound doctrines and heresy, is better ascertained, than it has ever been before; and the Christian world are equally averse to whatever approaches to Socinian impiety, and to the mooted of interminable questions.

In the statement of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, there are two extremes to be avoided. The one is, that of pusillanimously shrinking from their bold originality, and attempting to recommend them to the acceptance of proud and worldly-minded men by the artifices of palliation and disguise—of which, in our opinion, the Bishop of Lincoln has given an egregious specimen in his late work;* the other extreme is that of stating them in a metaphysical form, mixing doubtful deductions with plain assertions, and thereby incumbering them with needless subtleties and refinements. We should neither be ashamed of the dictates of the Spirit, nor “add to his words, lest we be reproved.” They will always appear with the most advantage, and carry the most conviction, when they are exhibited in their native simplicity, without being mixed with heterogeneous matter, or with positions of doubtful authority. In our apprehension, the true way of contemplating the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, is to consider them as *facts* believed on the authority of the Supreme Being, not to be proved by reason, since their truth does not result from any perceptible relations in our ideas, but they owe their existence entirely to the will and counsel of the Almighty Potentate. On this account we nev-

*Entitled “A Refutation of Calvinism.”

er consider it safe to rest their truths on a philosophical basis, nor imagine it is possible to add to their evidence by an elaborate train of reasoning. Let the fair grammatical import of scripture language be investigated, and whatever propositions are by an easy and natural interpretation deducible from thence, let them be received as the dictates of infinite wisdom, whatever aspect they bear, or whatever difficulties they present. Repugnant to reason, they never can be, because they spring from the Author of it; but superior to reason, whose limits they will infinitely surpass, we must expect to find them, since they are a communication of such matters of fact respecting the spiritual and eternal world, as need not have been communicated if the knowledge of them could have been acquired from any other quarter. The facts with which we have become acquainted in the natural world would appear stupendous, were they communicated merely on the evidence of testimony: they fail to astonish us chiefly because they have been arrived at step by step, by means of their analogy to some preceding one. We have climbed the eminence by a slow progression, and our prospect has insensibly widened as we advanced, instead of being transported thither instantaneously by a superior power. Revelation conducts us to the truth at once, without previous training, without any intellectual process preceding, without condescending to afford other proof than what results from the veracity and wisdom of the Creator; and when we consider that this truth respects much sublimer relations and concerns than those which subsist in the material world, that it regards the ways and counsels of God respecting man's eternal destiny, is it surprising it should embrace what greatly surpassed our previous conjectures, and even transcends our perfect comprehension? To a serious and upright mind, however, its discoveries are no sooner made

than they become supremely acceptable : the interposition of the Deity in the great moral drama is seen to be absolutely necessary ; since none but Infinite Wisdom could clear up the intricacies, nor any power short of Omnipotence relieve the distress it produced. These very truths which some ridicule as mysteries, and others despise as dogmas, are to the enlightened "sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb," apart from which, whatever else is contained in the Bible, would be perfectly tasteless and insipid. Though he receives every communication from God with devout and grateful emotions, he feels no hesitation in confessing, that it is in these parts of revelation he especially exults and triumphs ; it is these, which in his estimation entitle it to the appellation of "*marvellous light*."

If it is no small gratification, to find so perfect a concurrence in these sentiments, on the part of our author ; —to find them stated and illustrated in so able a manner as they are throughout this work, is a still greater. The first letter in this volume is devoted to a general view of the Christian Doctrines, designed to obviate certain prejudices, and to prepare the mind for that serious inquiry into their nature and import, which cannot fail, under the blessing of God, of conducting it to the most satisfactory conclusions.

Our author never loses sight of the gospel as a *restorative dispensation* : this is its primary and most essential feature ; and the most dangerous and numerous aberrations from it, may be traced to the neglect of considering it in this light. It is not the prescription of a rule of life to the innocent, but the annunciation of a stupendous method of relief for the sinner. Overlooking all petty varieties, and subordinate distinctions, it places the whole human race on one level ; abases them all in the dust before the Infinite Majesty ; and offers indiscriminately a provision of sanctification to the

polluted, and of pardon to the guilty. These are the glad tidings ; this is the jubilee of the whole earth, proclaimed in the songs of angels, celebrated in the praises of the church, alike in her militant and her triumphant state, whether toiling in the vale of mortality, or rejoicing before the throne.

The second letter in the series which composes this volume, is on the Depravity of Human Nature ; where the reader will find the evidence of that melancholy, but fundamental truth, exhibited with much conciseness, perspicuity, and force. The third is employed in stating the arguments for the Atonement of Christ under the four divisions of typical, prophetic, historical, and declamatory proofs ; and the whole is closed by a very luminous and satisfactory answer to the most specious objections against that momentous truth. In adverting to the objection to a vicarious sacrifice, founded on the notion of its being unjust that the innocent should be appointed to suffer in the room of the guilty, we meet with the following admirable passage of Archbishop Tillotson, remarkable for that perfect good sense, simplicity, and perspicuity, which distinguish the writings of that excellent prelate.

'If the matter,' says he, 'were searched to the bottom, all this perverse contention about our Saviour's suffering for our benefit, but not in our stead, will signify just nothing. For if Christ died for our benefit, so as some way or other, *by virtue of his death and sufferings* to save us from the wrath of God, and to procure our escape from eternal death,—this, for ought I know, is all that any body means by his dying in our stead. For he that dies with an intention to do that benefit for another, or to *save him from death*, doth certainly, to all intents and purposes, die in his place and stead. And if they will grant this to be their meaning, the controversy is at an end ; and both sides are agreed in the thing and do only differ in the phrase and manner of expression, which is to seek a quarrel and an occasion of difference, when there is no real ground for it : a thing which ought to be very far from reasonable and peaceable minds. For many of the Socinians say, that our Saviour's voluntary death and sufferings procured his exaltation at the right hand of God, and power and authority to forgive sins, and to

give eternal life to as many as he pleased: so, that they grant that his obedience and sufferings, in the meritorious consequence of them, redound to our benefit and advantage, as much as we pretend to say they do; only they are loth, in express terms, to acknowledge that Christ died in our stead; and this for no other reason that I can imagine, but *because they have denied it so often and so long.* Vol. II. p. 64.

We have only to say, on this part of the subject, that we heartily commiserate the state of that man's mind, who, whatever Socinian prejudices he may have felt against the most glorious of all doctrines, that of the atonement, does not feel them shaken, at least, if not removed, by the arguments adduced in this letter.

The next is devoted to the defence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which our author evinces in a masterly manner, from the predictions of the ancient prophets, compared with their application in the New Testament,—from the conduct, the miracles, and the discourses of our Lord,—from the declarations of his apostles—and from the concurrent testimony of the early Christian writers and martyrs, before the council of Nice. Under the last head, the reader will meet with a copious induction of passages attesting this grand doctrine, selected with much judgment, and applied with great force. The author all along contends for the divinity of Christ as a *fundamental tenet*; and, of course, will forfeit all pretensions to candour with *rational* Christians, on whose approbation, indeed, he appears to set very little value.

In the next letter, which is on Conversion, he has treated of the nature and necessity of that new birth, on which our Lord insisted so strenuously in his discourse with Nicodemus, in a manner which will be as offensive to mere nominal Christians, as it will be instructive and satisfactory to serious and humble inquirers after truth. He shews, from well known and indubitable facts, the reality of such a change; and evinces

its indispensable necessity, from the express declarations of Scripture, the corruption of human nature, the exalted character of the Deity, and the nature of that pure and perfect felicity to which good men aspire after death. In illustrating this subject, he has made a happy use of Bishop Burnet's narrative of the conversion of the Earl of Rochester,—has carefully guarded his readers against the pernicious error of confounding regeneration with baptism,—and has closed the discussion with solving certain difficulties arising out of the subject, which have often perplexed serious minds.

As every effect naturally invites us to contemplate the cause, he passes from conversion to the consideration of Divine Influence, which is the subject of the succeeding letter ; and were we to give our opinion of the comparative merit of the different parts of this volume, we should be inclined to assign the palm to the disquisition on this confessedly mysterious subject. In no part, certainly, is the vigour of the author's very powerful understanding more eminently exerted ; in none are the prejudices founded on a pretended philosophy, more triumphantly dispelled. He has shewn, in the most satisfactory manner, that the belief of an immediate divine influence on the mind, not only accords with the sentiments of the wisest men in Pagan times, but that it is rendered highly reasonable by the close analogy it bears to the best established laws of the material world. Though there are many admirable passages in this portion of the work, which it would gratify us to lay before our readers, we must content ourselves with the following.

'No person can look into the world with the eye of a philosopher, and not soon ascertain, that the grand theatre of phenomena which lies before him, is naturally subdivided into two great classes of scenery : the one exhibiting constrained, the other voluntary motion ; the former characteristic of matter, the latter as clearly indicating something perfectly distinct from matter, and possessing to-

tally opposite qualities. "Pulverise matter (says Saurin,) give it all the different forms of which it is susceptible, elevate it to its highest degree of attainment, make it vast and immense, moderate, or small, luminous, or obscure, opaque, or transparent, there will never result any thing but *figures*; and never will you be able, by all these combinations, or divisions, to produce one single sentiment, one single thought." The reason is obvious: a substance compounded of innumerable parts, which every one acknowledges matter to be, cannot be the subject of an individual consciousness, the seat of which *must* be a simple and undivided substance: as the great Dr. Clark has long ago irrefragably shewn. Intellect and volition, are quite of a different nature from corporeal figure, or motion, and must reside in, or emanate from a different kind of being, a kind which to distinguish it from matter, is called spirit, or mind. Of these, the one is necessarily inert, the other essentially active. The one is characterized by want of animation, life, and even motion, except as it is urged by something *ab extra*; the other is living, energetic, self-moving, and possessed of power to move other things. We often fancy, it is true, that matter moves matter; but this, strictly speaking, is not correct. When one wheel, or lever, in a system of machinery, communicates motion to matter, it can, at most, only communicate what it has received; and if you trace the connexion of the mechanism, you will at length arrive at a first mover, which first mover is in fact, *spiritual*. If, for example, it be an animal, it is evidently the spiritual part of that animal from whence the motion originally springs. If otherwise, if it be the descent of a weight, or the fall of water, or the force of a current of air, or the expansive power of steam, the action must be ultimately referred to what are styled powers of nature, that is, to gravitation or elasticity; and these, it is now well known, cannot be explained by any allusion to material principles, but to the independent operation of the Great Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our being—the finger of God touching and urging the various subordinate springs, which, in their turn, move the several parts of the universe. Thus God acts in all places, in all times, and upon all persons. The whole material world, were it not for his Spirit, would be inanimate and inactive; all motion is derived either from his energy, or from a spirit which he animates; and it is next to *certain*, that the only primary action is that of spirit, and the most direct and immediate that of spirit upon spirit.' p. 154.

We doubt not the intelligent reader will be of opinion that the author has gone to the very bottom of this subject, and will feel himself highly gratified in seeing it placed in so clear and convincing a light; the more so, as he has taken care to guard against its most obvious abuse, by shewing that the influence, for which

he contends, is not to be expected independent of means,—among which he considers prayer, and conscientious regard to known duty, as the principal. We earnestly recommend this part of the performance to such of our readers as have, upon too light grounds, imbibed philosophical prejudices against the doctrine contended for : a doctrine which lies at the foundation of all spiritual religion, though treated by many with an excess of insolence and scorn, which can hardly be accounted for, without adverting to the injudicious conduct of its advocates.

The important doctrine of Justification by Faith, forms the subject of the next letter in the series. Here, after confirming the position he means to defend by the authority of the Homilies, he proceeds to a more particular discussion of the subject, under three heads of inquiry : What is meant by justification—what by faith—and what is the genuine import of “justification by faith.” Under each of these, the reader will meet with much instruction, arising from a very luminous statement of truth, accompanied with happy illustrations. The charge against the doctrine pleaded for, of its tending to licentiousness, is very successfully combated and refuted.

The exhibition of the leading *doctrines* of Christianity is completed in the three following letters,—on Providence, the Resurrection, and the Eternal Existence of Man after Death. We perused with much satisfaction, the author's masterly defence of a particular providence, the denial of which is, to all practical purposes, equivalent to the denial of a providence altogether. Trust in God is the act of an individual, as all the exercises of piety must necessarily be ; so that if the providence of God embraces not the concerns of individuals, no rational foundation can be conceived for expecting protection from danger, or relief under distress, in

answer to prayer. The denial of a particular providence is, it must be confessed, the best possible expedient for keeping God at a distance—and on that account so vehemently insisted on by certain periodical writers, the poison of whose impiety, prepared, it is generally understood, by *hallowed* hands, and distributed through the nation in a popular and seducing vehicle, has met with a powerful antidote and rebuke from Dr. Gregory, who, himself a layman, will be honoured as the champion of that religion, which a clergyman has insulted and betrayed.* How is it that the conductors of the publication alluded to, allot to this clerical associate the province of libelling religion? Is it that its alliance with nominal sanctity gives rank impiety a new zest, at the same time that its total dereliction of principle more perfectly incorporates the specific design of the article with the general character of the work?

In treating of the Resurrection of the Dead, the author has happily availed himself of the striking analogies which the system of nature presents, as if designed on purpose, as Tertullian more than insinuates, to excite the expectation of such an event. Among others highly deserving attention, we shall present our readers with the following, in the words of Dr. Gregory.

‘Nearly allied to these are the examples of peculiar transformations undergone by various insects, and the state of rest, and insensibility, which precede those transformations: such as the chrysalis, or aurelia state of butterflies, moths, and silk-worms. The myrmaleon formicaleo, of whose larva, and its extraordinary history, Reaumur and Roesel have given accurate descriptions, continues in its insensible, or chrysalis state, about four weeks. The libellula, or dragon-fly, continues still longer in its state of inaction. Naturalists tell us, that the worm repairs to the margin of its pond in quest of a convenient place of abode during its insensible state. It attaches itself to a plant, or piece of dry wood, and the skin, which gradually becomes parched and brittle, at last splits opposite to the upper part of the thorax; through this aperture the insect, now

* See the Article on Methodism in the Edinburgh Review.

become winged, quickly pushes its way ; and being thus extricated from confinement, begins to expand its wings, to flutter, and, finally, to launch into the air with that gracefulness and ease which are peculiar to this majestic tribe. Now who that saw, for the first time, the little pendant coffin in which the insect lay entombed, and was ignorant of the transformation of which we are now speaking, would ever predict that, in a few weeks, perhaps in a few days or hours, it would become one of the most elegant and active of winged insects ? And who that contemplates with the mind of a philosopher this curious transformation, and knows that two years before the insect mounts into air, even while it is living in water, it has the rudiments of wings, can deny that the body of a dead man may, at some future period, be again invested with vigour and activity, and soar to regions for which some latent organization may have peculiarly fitted it.' p. 225.

In descanting on the change that will be effected by the Resurrection, when we shall be invested with a glorified body, the language of the author rises to a high pitch of elevation, and exhibits a scene which surpasses the brightest visions of poetry, while the exactness of the delineation, in its most essential lineaments, is attested by the "true sayings of God." The science with which the mind of the author is so richly imbued, enables him to mingle a refined spirit of philosophy with the colours of imagination, which without diminishing their brightness, compels the assent of the understanding, while it captivates the heart.

In the letter on the Eternal Existence after Death, the author strenuously opposes the sleep of the soul, and urges formidable, and, we apprehend, irrefragable arguments for interpreting the passages of scripture which speak of the everlasting misery of the impenitent, in their obvious and literal sense ; nor have we met with a discussion of this awful subject so calculated to carry conviction to a philosophical mind, provided it be disposed to bow to the authority of revelation. His confutation of the reasoning of his opponents, founded on the supposed ambiguity of the terms employed to denote an eternal duration, is particularly masterly.

On the third branch of his subject, which relates to the Duties of Christianity, he is comparatively brief,—not, it is evident, from his undervaluing their importance, but partly, we conceive, on account of the length of his former discussions, and partly because, in this part, there is little room for controversy. He has contented himself with arranging the duties of Christianity under three heads—those which relate to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves ; and with illustrating and enforcing them by a direct appeal to the language of Scripture.

Having endeavoured to put our readers in possession of the general plan and design of this work, we shall close this article with a few general observations on it.

Dr. Gregory throughout denominates the abettors of the simple humanity of Christ, Socinians, instead of employing their favourite appellation of Unitarians. We rejoice that he has done so, and hope his example will be generally followed. To accede to the appellation of Unitarians, is to yield up the very point in debate : for ask them what they mean by Unitarian, and they will feel no scruple in replying, that it denotes a believer in one God, in opposition to a Tritheist. That this is not asserted at random, is evident, as well from many other facts, as from the following very remarkable one, that, when a noted academic was, some years since, expelled from the university of Cambridge, amidst various points which he insisted on in his defence, one was this,—that it was quite absurd to censure him for avowing Unitarian principles, since he never heard of one person who publicly declared himself *not an Unitarian*. Now what did he mean by this singular assertion? Did he mean to say, that he never heard of more than one person who publicly affirmed his belief in a *plurality of persons* in the Godhead? This is impossible. What could he mean, then, but that he never

knew but of one person who affirmed himself *not to be a believer in one God?*—which is neither more nor less than to identify the term Unitarian with a believer in one God, and the term Trinitarian with a believer in three. Let the intelligent public judge, whether it is not high time to withhold from these men an appellation, which assumes the question at issue, and which cannot be bestowed without being converted into an occasion of insult and triumph over their opponents. There was a time when the learning and moderation of Lardner, and the fame and science of Priestley, combined to throw a transitory splendour over their system, and to procure from the Christian world forbearance and complaisance to which they were ill entitled. That time is passed. Such *rational* Christians as they are, should have discernment to perceive, that it is not with them as in months past, when the candle of their leader shone around them : it becomes them to bow their spirit to the humble state of their fortunes. They should learn at last to know themselves. The world is perfectly aware, whether they perceive it or not, that Socinianism is now a headless trunk, bleeding at every vein, and exhibiting no other symptoms of life, but its frightful convulsions.

But why should they be offended at being styled Socinians, when it is undeniable that they agree with Socinus in his fundamental position, (the simple humanity of Christ ;) which is all the agreement that subsists betwixt the followers of Calvin or of Arminius, and those eminent persons ? The Calvinists are far from concurring in every particular with Calvin, the Arminians with Arminius,—yet neither of them have violently disclaimed these appellations, or considered them as terms of reproach. Why are the Socinians only offended at being denominated after Socinus ? Is it because they differ in the nature of Christ's person from that cele-

brated Heresiarch? This they will not pretend. But they differ from him in many respects! In what respects? Is it in those respects in which his sentiments gave most offence to the Christian world? Is it that they have receded from him in that direction which brings them nearer to the generally received doctrine of the church? Just the reverse. In the esteem of all but themselves they have descended many degrees lower in the scale of error, have plunged many fathoms deeper in the gulf of impiety; yet with an assurance, of which they have furnished the only example, they affect to consider themselves injured by being styled Socinians, when they know, in their own consciences, that they differ from Socinus only in pushing the degradation of the Saviour to a much greater length—and that, in the views of the Christian world, their religious delinquences differ from his, only as treason differs from sedition, or sacrilege from theft. The appellation of Socinian, as applied to them, is a term of forbearance, calculated, if they would suffer it, not to expose, but to hide a part of their shame. Let them assume any denomination they please, provided it be such as will fairly represent their sentiments. Let them be styled Antiscripturalists, Humanitarians, Semi-deists, Priestleians, or Socinians. But let them not be designated by a term, which is merely coveted by them for the purposes of chicane and imposture.

Our readers will perceive that the system which Dr. Gregory strenuously abets is orthodoxy: but it is moderate and catholic; it is the orthodoxy of the three first centuries; it is that system which, communicated by Christ and his apostles, pervaded the church long before the confusion of modern sects arose, or even the distinction betwixt Protestants and Catholics was heard of; it is the orthodoxy which has nourished the root of piety in every age, warmed the breast of saints

and martyr, and will continue to subsist in the church till the heavens and the earth are no more.

We congratulate the public on the accession of Dr. G. to such a cause; and sincerely rejoice that, amidst his multifarious scientific pursuits, he has found time and inclination to meditate so deeply, and to exhibit so successfully, the "truth as it is in Jesus." We hope his example will stimulate other men of science and genius to pursue so noble a career. We will venture to assure them, that, upon a dying bed, it will occasion no regret to reflect upon their having enrolled their names with such illustrious laymen as Boyle, Newton, and Locke, in the defence of Christianity.

In a beautiful passage of Euripides, Medea is introduced expressing her surprise, that, amidst such a multitude of inventions and inquiries, the art of persuasion, the mistress of human volition, should alone have been neglected. This neglect cannot be imputed to Dr. Gregory. He has united, with extraordinary attainments in the severer sciences, the art of recommending his sentiments with the most impressive effect; and though he is above a solicitude respecting the minuter graces of finished composition, he exhibits, in an eminent degree, the most important ingredients of good writing. He is correct and luminous, and often rises to the tone of the most impassionable feeling. His language is eminently easy, flowing, and idiomatic. The abstractions of science have not in him exerted the influence often imputed to them, of chilling the heart, and impairing the vigour of the imagination. While he reasons with the comprehension and depth which distinguish the philosopher, he feels with ardour, and paints with force. He is often inspired and transported with his theme. In the midst of pursuits which are not always found to have a propitious effect on the religious character of their votaries, he has found the means of

preserving his devotion in its warmth, his faith in its purity, and his sensibility in its infantine freshness and vigour.

We must conclude with earnestly recommending this work to the attentive perusal of young persons, whose minds have been cultivated by science and letters : and must be permitted to add, that we are acquainted with no book in the circle of English literature, which is equally calculated to give persons of that description, just views of the evidence, the nature, and the importance of revealed religion.

REVIEW.



Memoirs of the late Rev. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, A. M. Including a Brief Analysis of his Works; together with Anecdotes and Letters of eminent Persons, his Friends and Correspondents: also, a General View of the Progress of the Unitarian Doctrine in England and America. By THOMAS BELSHAM, Minister of the Chapel in Essex-street. 8vo. pp. xxiv. 544.

As the life of Mr. Lindsey is evidently adopted as a vehicle for the propagation of Socinian sentiments, we shall be excused for being more copious in our remarks upon it, than the biography of a man of such extreme mediocrity of talents could otherwise possibly justify. If a zealous attachment to any system of opinions, can be supposed to be aided by its association with personal reputation, we cannot wonder at finding Mr. Lindsey's fondness for Socinianism so ardent and so persevering, inasmuch as the annals of religion scarcely furnish an instance of a celebrity acquired so entirely by the adoption of a particular creed. Luther and Calvin would have risen to distinction, in all probability, if the Reformation had never been heard of; while the existence of such a man as Mr. Lindsey, would not have been known beyond the precincts of his parish, had he not, under a peculiar combination of circumstances, embraced the tenets of Socinus.

His reputation is altogether accidental and factitious. Though the leading events of his life, with one exception, are marked by no striking peculiarities, yet, by the help of a great deal of adventitious matter, Mr. B. has contrived to make it the ground work of a bulky, and not unentertaining volume : disfigured, however, throughout, by that languid and inelegant verbosity, which characterises all his compositions. It must be confessed, Mr. Belsham has taken care in this work to exhibit himself as no ascetic, no religious enthusiast, but quite a man of the world ; not by lively delineation of its manners and foibles, still less by a development of the principles by which mankind are actuated, but by such a profusion of compliments bestowed on men of rank and title, and so perfect a prostration before secular grandeur, as has never been paralleled, we suspect, in a Christian Divine. At the 'pomp and circumstance' of human life, this philosopher appears awed, and planet-struck, and utterly incapable of exercising that small portion of discrimination with which nature has endowed him. Every nobleman or statesman he has occasion to introduce, is uniformly ushered in with a splendid retinue of gorgeous epithets, in which there are as little taste and variety as if they had been copied verbatim from the rolls at the Herald's office. Orators of pre-eminent powers, together with virtuous and enlightened noblemen, meet us at every turn, and we are not a little surprised at finding so much of the decoration and splendour of this mortal scene, in so close contact with the historical details of Unitarianism. We have long remarked the eagerness of Socinians to emblazon their system by associations with learning, rank, and fashion ; but on no other occasion have we seen this humour carried so far, as in these Memoirs.

The leading events of Mr. Lindsey's life are the

following. He was born, June 20, 1723, at Middlewich, in Cheshire, where his father was a mercer in respectable circumstances, but was afterwards reduced by misfortunes. His mother, whose maiden name was Spencer, was distantly related to the Marlborough family, and, previously to her marriage, lived twenty years in the family of Frances, Countess of Huntingdon—a circumstance which led to considerable intimacy, that continued for some years, with the celebrated Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who married the son of that Lady. Under the patronage of Lady Betty and Lady Ann Hastings, Mr. Lindsey was educated first at a school in the neighbourhood of Middlewich, whence he was removed, and placed under the care of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, master of the free grammar school in that town, who is represented as a gentleman of distinguished learning and piety. His vacations were usually spent at the mansion of his noble patronesses in the vicinity of Leeds, during the life of Lady Betty Hastings, and, after her decease, at Ashby Place, near Ashby de la Zouch, in Leicestershire, where Lady Ann then fixed her residence. In the 18th year of his age, May 21, 1741, he was admitted a student at St. John's, Cambridge, where he acquitted himself with credit in his academical exercises, and behaved with such exemplary propriety as to attract the attention of Dr. Reynolds, Bishop of Lincoln, who thought fit to entrust him with the care of his grandson, a youth of fifteen. He was elected fellow of St. John's College, in April, 1741. Having been ordained by Bishop Gibson, he was, at the recommendation of Lady Ann Hastings, presented to a chapel in Spital-square, by Sir George Wheeler. In a short time after his settlement in London, the Duke of Somerset received him into his house in the capacity of domestic chaplain. He continued after the decease of that nobleman, to

reside some time with the Dutchess dowager, better known by the title of Countess of Hertford, and, at her request, he accompanied her grandson, the present Duke of Northumberland, then about nine years of age, and in a delicate state of health, to the continent, where he continued two years; at the expiration of which time, he brought back his noble pupil, improved both in his health and learning. From this distinguished personage, he continued to receive attentions and favours as long as he lived. Immediately after his return from the continent, he was presented by the Earl of Northumberland, to the valuable rectory of Kirkby Whiske, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, at first under condition to resign it when the person for whom it was intended should come of age; but this young man dying a short time afterwards, it was given to Mr. Lindsey unconditionally, in the usual form. In this very retired situation, Mr. Lindsey continued about three years; and during his residence in Yorkshire, he became acquainted with the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne at Richmond: a circumstance which led to important consequences, and to which he was indebted under Providence for the most important blessing of his life.

In the year 1756, at the request of the Huntingdon family, he resigned the living of Kirkby Whiske, for the living of Piddletown, in Dorsetshire, which was in the gift of the Earl of Huntingdon. In this place he lived seven years; and in 1760, married Miss Elsworth, the step-daughter of Archdeacon Blackburne, a lady whose principles were congenial with his own, and who is represented as possessed of a superior understanding, and of exalted virtue. It was during his residence in that situation that he first began to entertain scruples concerning the lawfulness of Trinitarian worship, and of his continuing to officiate in the estab-

lished church. It appears he had from his early youth disapproved of some things in the thirty-nine articles. Some years afterwards, these doubts were matured into a full conviction that the Divinity of Christ was an erroneous tenet, and that the Father was the sole object of worship ; in consequence of which, while in Dorsetshire, he took some previous steps with a view to quitting his preferment in the church. In the year 1762, upon the appointment of the late Duke of Northumberland to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he was strongly urged to accept the place of chaplain to his Grace ; which, from the preference he gave to a retired situation, he declined. An opportunity occurring the year following of exchanging his living for that of Catterick in Yorkshire, he made the exchange, for the sake of enjoying the society of Archdeacon Blackburne and his family, who lived in that neighbourhood. On this occasion, Mr. Belsham justly remarks, It may appear singular that Mr. Lindsey could submit to that renewed subscription, which was requisite in order to his induction to a new living.

‘ And the case,’ he adds, ‘ appears the more extraordinary, as many clergymen, who, in consequence of a revolution in their opinions, had become dissatisfied with the Articles, would never, for the sake of obtaining the most valuable preferment, subscribe them again, though while they were permitted to remain unmolested, they did not perceive it to be their duty to retire from the church.’ p. 17.

The extreme want of candour and sincerity evinced by such conduct, is very unsatisfactorily apologized for by Mr. Lindsey, and is very gently reproved by Mr. Belsham. The principal plea alleged by Mr. L. in defence of himself, is, that as he continued to officiate in the forms of the liturgy, his renewed subscription gave him little concern, since he considered himself, every time he used the liturgy, as virtually repeating

his subscription. At length, he brought himself, he says, to consider the Trinitarian forms in the liturgy, and the invocations at the entrance of the litany, as

‘A threefold representation of the one God, the Father, governing all things by himself and by his Son and Spirit ; and as a threefold way of addressing him as a Creator, and original benevolent cause of all things, as Redeemer of mankind by his Son, and their Sanctifier by his Holy Spirit.’ p. 23.

How far he was influenced by mercenary considerations in retaining his station under such circumstances, it is impossible to say ; but that he was guilty of much collusion and impious prevarication in this affair, cannot be reasonably doubted ; nor is there any species of simulation or dissimulation in religion, which might not be justified on pretences equally plausible : and when we recollect that Mr. L. persisted in that conduct for a series of years, we shall find it difficult to conceive of him, as that prodigy of virtue, which Mr. Belsham represents him. ‘He must be a severe moralist,’ says Mr. B. ‘whom such a concession does not satisfy.’ And what is this concession, that is to stop every mouth, and to convert censure into praise ? We will give it in Mr. L.’s own words : it is this :

‘Not,’ says he, ‘that I now justify myself therein. Yea, rather I condemn myself. But as I have humble hope of the divine forgiveness, let not men be too rigid in their censures.’ p. 24.

It is impossible to conceive a confession of conduct extremely criminal, in terms of lighter reprehension, but agreeably to the theory of Mr. B. the merit of repentance so much exceeds the moral turpitude of transgression, that the faintest indications of it transport him with admiration. For our parts, were we not aware of the tendency of Socinianism to produce a most attenuated conception of the evil of sin, we should have expected to find such insincerity and impiety de-

plored in the strongest language of penitential sorrow. As we wish, however, to do ample justice to the real virtues of Mr. L. we feel a pleasure in quoting the following account of the manner in which he conducted himself while he was rector of Catterick.

'No sooner was he settled,' says his biographer, 'in his new situation, than he applied himself with great assiduity, in his extensive and populous parish, to perform the duties of a parochial minister. He regularly officiated twice on the Sunday in his parish church, and in the interval between the services he catechised young people. He visited the sick, he relieved the poor, he established and supported charity-schools for the children, he spent considerable sums of money in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in providing medicines for the diseased, and in purchasing and distributing the books for the instruction of the ignorant. In his domestic arrangements, the greatest economy was observed, that he and his excellent lady might have the greater surplus to expend in liberality and charity; for it was a rule with him to lay up nothing from the income of his living.' p. 26.

This is, unquestionably, a pleasing picture of the character of an exemplary Christian pastor. It does not appear that any considerable success attended his labours. On this head he contents himself with expressing a faint hope, that some of the seed he had sowed, might not be lost.

In this situation he continued ten years, till a dangerous fit of sickness roused his conscience, and rendered his continuance in the discharge of his ecclesiastical functions insupportable. We are far from wishing to depreciate the value of that sacrifice which Mr. Lindsey tardily and reluctantly made to the claims of conscience; but we cannot conceal our surprise, that a measure to which he was forced, in order to quell the apprehensions he most justly entertained of the displeasure of the Almighty, after a system of prevarication persisted in for upwards of ten years, should be extolled in terms, which can only be applied with propriety to instances of heroic virtue. To prefer the

surrender of certain worldly advantages to a perseverance in conduct highly criminal, evinces a mind not utterly insensible to the force of moral obligation, and nothing more. Our admiration must be reserved for a higher species of excellence ;—for an adherence to the side of delicacy and honour, where many plausibilities might be urged to the contrary ; or a resolute pursuit of the path of virtue, when it is obstructed by the last extremities of evil. Mr. Lindsey renounced, it is true, a respectable and lucrative situation in the church, rather than continue any longer in the practice of what he considered as idolatry. But he was unincumbered with a family : he possessed some personal property, and enjoyed the friendship of several great and noble personages, who were never likely to suffer him to sink into absolute poverty. He merely descended to the level where many of the best, and some of the greatest of men, have chosen to place themselves, and where his friend Dr. Priestley, whose talents would have commanded any preferment in the church, chose, from an attachment of the same principles, to remain for life. We approve his resignation of his living, but we confess we are more disposed to wonder that he could reconcile himself to continue in his situation so long, than that he should feel himself compelled to quit it at last.

This event took place in the year 1773 ; after which he came to London, and a plan was soon set on foot for opening a chapel for him in the metropolis, where, retaining the use of a liturgy modified agreeably to his views, he might promulgate the tenets of Socinus. Many persons, Mr. B. informs us, both of the establishment and among the dissenters, aided the undertaking, among whom are particularly enumerated the following : Dr. Priestley, and Dr. Price, Samuel Shore, Esq. of Norton Hall, in Yorkshire, and Robert Newton, Esq. of Norton House, in the same village.

These gentlemen, in conjunction with others, entered into a subscription, to indemnify him for the necessary expenses incurred in procuring and fitting up his chapel. The place fixed upon for this grand experiment, was a room in Essex House, Essex Street, which having before been used as an auction-room, was capable, at a moderate expense, of being turned into a convenient place of worship. Here Mr. L. introduced his improved liturgy, formed very much upon the plan of Dr. Clarke's, but with such variations as corresponded to the difference of his views from those of that celebrated divine. From this period, the life of Mr. L. proceeds in a very equable and uniform course, with little worthy of remark, besides the various publications to which the system he had adopted gave birth; and over the congregation formed in Essex Street, he continued to preside till his 70th year, when he thought fit to retire from a public station: after which he lived sixteen years, when he was attacked with a disease which was judged to be a pressure of the brain, and expired in the 86th year of his age. Such are the outlines of a narrative which Mr. Belsham has contrived to extend to upwards of five hundred octavo pages. It is by no means our intention to follow the biographer through his boundless excursions, or to criticise every remark which appears to us justly obnoxious to censure. We shall content ourselves with selecting a few passages, and making a few observations, which may serve to illustrate the genius and progress of Socinianism, the promotion of which evidently appears to be the sole object of the writer of these Memoirs.

The secession of Mr. Lindsey from the established church produced much less impression than might have been expected; nor does it appear that his example was followed by one individual among the clergy, until Mr. Disney, his brother-in-law, after the lapse of

some years, adopted the same measure, and afterwards became his colleague in the ministry. The establishment of a Socinian chapel with a reformed liturgy in the metropolis, is narrated by our biographer with the utmost pomp, as forming a distinguished epoch in the annals of religion; and undoubtedly great hopes were entertained of its producing a memorable revolution among the Episcopalians, but these expectations were frustrated. The attendance, composed chiefly of persons of opulence, (among whom the Duke of Grafton made the principal figure,) was at no time very numerous, and no similar society was formed from among the members of the established church in any part of the united kingdom. The utmost that the efforts of Lindsey, Priestley, and others, effected, was to convert the teachers of Arianism among the dissenters, into Socinians, who exerted themselves with tolerable success to disseminate their principles in their respective congregations: so that the boasted triumphs of Socinianism consisted in sinking that section of the dissenting body, who had already departed from the faith, a few degrees lower in the gulf of error. From these very Memoirs under consideration, we derive the most convincing evidence that the tenets of Socinus, with respect to the nation at large, have lost ground, and that the people of England are much less favourably disposed to them than formerly. They also present us a very full and particular account of the association of a part of the clergy at the Feathers Tavern, to procure relief in the matter of subscription; for which purpose, agreeably to a resolution of the general body, on the 6th of February, 1772, a petition was presented to the house of commons. The number of the petitioners amounted to nearly two hundred and fifty, among whom, the names of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, and Law, Bishop of Carlisle, were the most distinguished. Of

the state of the public mind in the metropolis, we have a striking picture in a letter from John Lee, afterwards solicitor-general, a zealous friend of the discontented clergy. 'It will surprise you who live in the country, (says he,) and consequently have not been informed of the discoveries of the metropolis, that the Christian religion is not thought to be an object worthy of the least regard; and that it is not only the most prudent, but the most virtuous, and benevolent thing in the world, to divert men's minds from such frivolous subjects with all the dexterity that can be. This is no exaggeration, I assure you; on the contrary, it seems to be the opinion (and their conduct will show it) of nine-tenths of both houses of parliament!' Allowing for some slight exaggerations arising from the chagrin and vexation of the writer, it is still impossible not to perceive, if any credit is due to his statement, that the parliament were not in a disposition to feel any conscientious objections to the repeal of the articles, and that if they opposed such a measure, that opposition originated simply from the fear of innovation common to politicians. The manner in which the debate was conducted when the affair came actually under the consideration of the house, confirms this conclusion.

There was not one member who expressed his belief in the articles: it was treated entirely as a political question, without once adverting to its intrinsic merits, as involving a religious controversy, and Mr. Hans Stanley opposed the bringing up of the petition, as it tended to disturb the peace of the country, which, in his opinion, ought to be the subject of a fortieth article, which would be well worth all the thirty-nine.* With such levity and contempt was the national creed treated at that time. Will the sturdiest champion of Socinianism affirm that a similar discussion in the house of commons,

* See pages 54, 55, of these memoirs.

or in the upper house, would be conducted in a similar manner at present? or that there would not be one member who would contend for the continuance of the articles on the ground of their intrinsic excellence and verity? The fact is, that through the secularity and irreligion of the clergy, evangelical truth was nearly effaced from the minds of the members of the establishment in the higher ranks, and that an indolent acquiescence in established formularies, had succeeded to the ardour with which the great principles of religion were embraced at the Reformation. Such was the state of the public mind, that in a contest between orthodoxy and heresy, the former proved triumphant, merely because it was already established, and had the plea of antiquity and prescription in its favour. Since that period, vital religion has revived in the national church, the flame of controversy has been widely spread; the inconsistency of Socinianism with the scriptures, together with its genuine tendency and character, has been fully developed: it has lost the attraction of novelty; it has revolted the minds of men by its impiety; and having been weighed in the balance, has been found wanting. If among the clergy there still subsist a small remnant who are attached to those unscriptural tenets, they are content with being connived at, and nothing could now urge them to the imprudence of presenting their claims for legal security to the legislature. We hear nothing of an intention to renew the scenes which took place at the Feathers Tavern in 1772.

We consider this as a decisive proof that Socinianism has lost ground in the nation, notwithstanding its prevalence in societies of a certain description among the dissenters: those who never formally renounced the orthodox doctrine, have, in consequence of recent discussions, become more than even attached to it; while that class of dissenters who were already moving

in an heretical direction, have reposed in Socinianism, as their natural centre of gravity. From several other circumstances recorded in these Memoirs, the same inference may be drawn with respect to the discredit under which this system lies at present, compared with the countenance and indulgence with which it was received thirty or forty years back. While Mr. Lindsey was deliberating on the propriety of quitting his living, it was suggested to him by Dr. Priestley, that he might continue to officiate, by making such alterations in the public offices of devotion as corresponded to his peculiar views. 'Nor was there any ground to suspect,' says Mr. B. 'that he would have met with any molestation from his superiors.' Mr. Chambers, who held the living of Oundle, in Northamptonshire, Mr. Disney, for many years, and others, did so without being called to account for their conduct. We should be sorry to express ourselves with an improper degree of confidence, but we may venture to express a firm persuasion, that such a silent repeal of the doctrine of the church by the mere authority of a parochial minister, would not now be permitted to pass unnoticed, or uncensured, in any part of the kingdom. The dignitaries of the church are alive to the importance of the distinguishing truths of Christianity, and would shew themselves prompt and eager, as appears from recent instances, to discourage the open disavowal of them. We have no hesitation in asserting that the hope of rendering the tenets of the Polish heresiarch, popular and prevalent throughout this nation, was at no period so completely extinguished as at the present; and from a certain air of despondency which the Memorialist of Lindsey betrays, amidst all his gasconades, we are convinced he is of the same opinion. The disposition on all occasions to vaunt of their success, and to predict with great confidence the

speedy triumph of their principles, is a peculiar feature in the character of modern Socinians, and the absurd and exaggerated statements of matters of fact into which this propensity betrays them, are truly ludicrous. All other sorts of enthusiasts of whom we have either heard or read, are, in this respect, cold and phlegmatic compared with them. In numerous extracts from the letters of Mr. Lindsey's correspondents, and of others, representations are made of numerous and rapid conversions to Socinianism, which Mr. B. from a regard to truth and decency, finds it necessary to correct and apologize for, as the effusion of well-intended, but intemperate zeal. The boast of success is almost invariably the precursor of a statement on the part of Mr. B. in which it is either repealed, or qualified; and it is but doing him justice to say, that his judgement and experience have exempted him from those illusions and deceptions of which his party have become the easy dupes. We had been confidently informed, for instance, that almost all the people of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts, were becoming Socinians, and that the ministers, with the exception of one or two, had already declared themselves; when it appears from the unimpeachable authority of Mr. Wells, himself a Socinian, and an inhabitant of that city, that there is but one professedly Unitarian chapel throughout New England, and so little sanguine is he with respect to the spread of that doctrine, that he strongly deprecates its discussion, from a conviction that it will issue in producing among the body of the people a more confirmed attachment to orthodoxy.* It is also worthy of remark, that these extravagant boasts of success are not accompanied with the slightest advertence to the moral or spiritual effects, which the Socinian doctrine produces on the character: this is a consideration, which rarely, if ever, enters in-

* See his Letter in the Appendix of the Memoirs.

to the mind of its most zealous abettors, who appear to be perfectly satisfied if they can but accomplish a change of sentiment, however inefficacious to all practical purposes. Their converts are merely proselyted to an opinion, without pretending to be converted to God; and if they are not as much injured by the change as the proselytes made by the Pharisees of old, it must be ascribed to causes totally distinct from the superior excellence of the tenets which they have embraced. They have been taught to discard the worship of Christ, and to abjure all dependence upon him as a Saviour—an admirable preparation, it must be confessed, for a devout and holy life. Let the abettors of those doctrines produce, if they can, a single instance of a person, who, in consequence of embracing them, was reclaimed from a vicious to a virtuous life, from a neglect of serious piety to an exemplary discharge of its obligations and duties; and their success, to whatever extent it has been realized, would suggest an argument in their favour deserving some attention. But who is ignorant that among the endless fluctuations of fashions and opinions recorded in the annals of religion, the most absurd and pernicious systems have flourished for a while; and that Arianism, for instance, which these men profess to abhor almost as much as orthodoxy, prevailed to such a degree for years, as to threaten to become the prevalent religion of Christendom.* Socinianism can boast but few converts compared with infidelity; in England, at least, they have gone hand in hand, and their progress has been simultaneous, derived from the same causes, and productive of the same effects. Shall we therefore affirm that infidelity is to be rejected with less confidence, because it possesses in reality that to which Socinianism only pre-

* See the 2d Book of Sulpicius Severus, Chapter 35. "*Tumhæresis Arrii prorupit totumque orbem infecto errore turbaverat.*"

tends? When we reflect on the inert and torpid character of Socinianism, it is surprising any serious expectation should be entertained of its final triumph. From innumerable passages in these Memoirs, it appears that the far greater part of those who have embraced it in the established church, have been content to retain their situation; and it is certain that of the two hundred and fifty who joined in the petition for relief in the matter of subscription, Mr. Lindsey was the only person who made any sacrifice of emolument to principle. We find both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Belsham incessantly reproaching Unitarians with timidity, in declining the avowal of their sentiments; and the former remarking with just indignation, that amidst the multitudes that concurred in his views, there was but one member of the established church that afforded him any pecuniary aid towards defraying the necessary expenses attendant on the opening of his chapel. The avowal of Socinianism among dissenters, has rarely been followed by worldly privations; and in the church of England, where such consequences must have ensued, it has not been made. Except in the instances of Lindsey, Jebb, and a very few others, the converts to Socinianism have stooped to the meanest prevarication, and the most sacrilegious hypocrisy, rather than sacrifice their worldly emoluments and honours. Compare this with the conduct of the Puritans in the reign of Charles the Second; who, though the points at issue were comparatively trifling and insignificant, chose, to the number of two thousand, to encounter every species of obloquy rather than do violence to their conscience; and learn the difference between the heroism inspired by Christian principle, and the base and pusillanimous spirit of heresy. What an infatuation to expect that a system, which inspires its votaries with no better sentiments and feelings than are evinced by these decisive

facts, will ever become the prevailing belief; a system which, while it militates against every page of revelation, is betrayed by the selfish timidity of its followers! The system of Socinus is a cold negation; the whole secret of it consists in thinking meanly of Christ; and what tendency such a mode of thinking can have to inspire elevation or ardour, it is not easy to comprehend. If it is calculated to relieve the conscience of a weight which the principles of orthodoxy render it difficult to shake off without complying with the conditions of the gospel, infidelity answers the same purpose still better, and possesses a still higher degree of simplicity,—meaning by that term what Socinians generally mean, the total absence of mystery.

Great part of these Memoirs are occupied in giving a copious analysis of Mr. L.'s publications, which, possessing no intrinsic merit, nor having excited more than a temporary interest, it would be trifling with the patience of our readers to suppose they could derive either entertainment or instruction from seeing them abridged. Of Mr. Lindsey, considered as a writer, it is sufficient to observe, that the measure of intellect he displays, is the most ordinary, and that he was not possessed of the power, in its lowest degree, of either inventing what was rare, or embellishing what was common. He was perspicuous, because he contented himself, on all occasions, with the most common-place thoughts; he was simple, because he aspired to nothing more than to convey his meaning in intelligible terms, without the least conception of force, elegance, or harmony. Though his writings are replete with professions of unbounded liberality and candour, it is evident, from his treatment of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, that he was indulgent only towards those who approached nearer to infidelity than himself. Nothing can be conceived more splenetic and acrimonious than

his examination of that ingenious author's 'Plea for the Divinity of Christ,' who, in return for compliments and condescensions, which, however unworthy of the cause he was defending, were sufficient to soften a Cerberus, met with nothing but rudeness and insolence. It was truly amusing to see the imbecility of a Lindsey assuming the airs of a Warburton. Throughout the whole of that publication, he affects to consider Mr. Robinson as a mere superficial declaimer; although his friend Archdeacon Blackburne, Mr. B. informs us, always spoke of the Plea as a most able and unanswerable performance: So much for the modesty of this heretical confessor!

But it is time to leave Mr. L. to that oblivion which is the infallible destiny of him and of his works, and to proceed to make a few remarks on the narrative, and the miscellaneous strictures of his biographer. In the first place, we congratulate him on his abatement of that tone of arrogance which so strikingly characterized his former publications: not that we ever expect him to exhibit himself in the light of an amiable or unassuming writer, which would be for the *Æthiopian* to change his skin; but it is with pleasure we remark less insolence and dogmatism than he has displayed on other occasions. He writes like a person who is conscious he is supporting a sinking cause; an air of despondency may be detected amidst his efforts to appear gay and cheerful. He knows perfectly well that he is celebrating the obsequies, not the triumph, of Socinianism; and from the little advantage it has derived from his former efforts, his vanity will not prevent him from suspecting that he is giving dust to dust, and ashes to ashes.

In this, as in all his former publications, he evinces a total ignorance of human nature, together with that propensity to over-rate the practical effect of meta-

physical theories, which almost invariably attaches to metaphysicians of an inferior order. He who invents a metaphysical system, which possesses the least claims to public regard, must have paid a profound attention to the actual constitution of human nature. He must have explored the most delicate and intricate processes of the mind, and kept a vigilant eye on the various phenomena which it presents. He is necessarily *above* his theory; having been conducted to it by an independent effort of thought. He has not adjusted his observations to his hypothesis, but his hypothesis to his observations. The humble disciple, the implicit admirer, proceeds too often in a directly opposite manner. All he knows of the mental constitution, in its more intricate movements, he derives from the system prepared to his hand, which he adopts with all its crudities, and confidently employs as the key which is to unlock all the recesses of nature. Having been accustomed to contemplate the human mind with a constant view to the technical arrangements to which he has devoted himself, he estimates the practical importance of metaphysical theories by what has passed in his own mind. We are fully convinced that the bulk of mankind are very little influenced by metaphysical theories, and that even in minds which are more prone to speculation, metaphysical dogmas are seldom so firmly embraced, or so deeply realized, as to be productive of important practical effects. The advocate of necessity and the champion of liberty, will, in the same state of moral proficiency, act precisely the same part in similar circumstances. Mr. Belsham, however, in the plenitude of his enthusiasm for the doctrine of philosophical necessity, ascribes, without hesitation, the ruin of multitudes of young persons to their embracing the opposite tenet. It is truly surprising that he who was so quick-sighted as to perceive the tendency of

the notion of liberty to promote immoral conduct, should entertain no suspicion of a similar tendency in the doctrine of God's being the author of sin, which Mr. B. repeatedly asserts.

'The true solution of the first difficulty (says Mr. B.) whether God be the author of sin? appears to be this: that God is, strictly speaking, the author of evil; but that, in the first place, he never ordains or permits evil but with a view to the production of a greater good, which could not have existed without it. And secondly, that though God is the author of evil, both natural and moral, he is not the approver of evil; he does not delight in it for its own sake; it must be the object of his aversion, and what he would never permit or endure, if the good he intends could have been accomplished without it. With respect to the justice of punishment, the best and only philosophical solution of it, is, that under the divine government all punishment is remedial. Moral evil is the disease, punishment is the process of cure, of greater or less intensity, and of longer or shorter duration, in proportion to the malignity and inveteracy of the malady, but ultimately of sovereign efficacy under the divine government, to operate a perfect cure; so that those whose vices have been the means of proving, purifying, and exalting the virtues of others, shall, in the end, share with them in their virtue and their triumph, and the *impartial justice*, and infinite benevolence of the Divine Being, will be made known, adored, and celebrated through the whole created universe.' pp. 323, 4.

The malignant tendency of such representations as the foregoing, is so obvious, that it is quite unnecessary to point it out to our readers. How vain are all precautions against sin, if in all cases it is produced by the omnipotent power of the Deity! and what motive can remain for avoiding it, if it is certain of being ultimately crowned with happiness and glory! The distinction between producing it, and approving of it for its own sake, with which the doctrine is attempted to be palliated, is perfectly futile; for this is ascribing no more to the Deity than must in justice be ascribed to the most profligate of mankind, who never commit sin for its own sake, but purely with a view to certain advantages with which it is connected; and the difference between the two cases arises, not from any distinction

in the moral character of the proceeding, but simply from the superior comprehension of view, with which the conduct of the Deity is accompanied. As the perpetration of vice is, upon this system, a calamity, not a crime, it is but fitting and necessary it should receive a compensation; and for this Mr. B. has provided, by representing the ultimate happiness of such as have been the means of purifying the virtue of others by their vices, as the effect of the impartial justice of the Deity. Persons of this description are, it seems, a species of benefactors, and it is but right they should, in due time, be rewarded. They are the scavengers of the universe, and having done a great deal of necessary, though dirty work, they are entitled to commiseration at present, and to proportionable compensation in another state of being. How admirably are these views adapted to promote a horror of sin! What tenderness of conscience, fear of offending, deep humility, and penitence, may we expect to find in Mr. Belsham, and in his admirers! Doubtless their eyes are a fountain of tears, which, like Jeremiah, they are incessantly pouring out for those vices and impieties, which are the sure and certain pledges of endless felicity.

To expect Mr. B. to write a bulky volume without intermingling a large portion of infidelity, would be to expect grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles. In the work under consideration, he fully maintains the consistency of his character. He more than insinuates his disbelief of a great, if not the greater part, of the Mosaic history. Mr. Lindsey having expressed himself in terms of just reprehension with respect to the conduct of those who reject the books of Moses, Mr. B. takes upon him to censure the severity of his friend.

‘But surely if the venerable writer (says he,) had reconsidered the case with his usual calmness and impartiality, he would have seen that a person may be a very firm believer in the divine mission

and doctrine of Christ, and be well satisfied with the general evidence of the divine legation of Moses, while he at the same time may entertain very serious doubts, whether the books commonly attributed to Moses were really written throughout by him, and whether either the narrative or the institute, exist at present exactly in the form in which he delivered them.' p. 408.

But supposing the narrative to be in certain point false, the institution misrepresented and disguised, and the books which we term the Pentateuch the production of some unknown author, who does not see the impossibility of separating the truth from the falsehood and of attaching, on any consistent principles, to any part of it, the credit due to a Divine communication. the spirit of infidelity evinced in these passages, is little different from that which pervades the pages of Bolingbroke and Voltaire. But such is the genuine progress of Socinianism : it begins with denying some of the clearest propositions in the New Testament, in order to which its claims to inspiration must be weakened or annulled ; whence it proceeds to dispute the authority of the Old, till the whole Bible be virtually set aside as the umpire of controversy. Among the other sublime discoveries to which Mr. B. has been led by a critical investigation of the writings of the New Testament, one is, that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses no authority whatever, or to use a term of his own invention, no *external* authority. Speaking of the Duke of Grafton, he says,

'In a paper, dated Jan. 1, 1792, the Duke expresses a belief that the exaltation of Christ to dominion and authority was the consequence of his submission to those sufferings which "were so efficacious, perhaps so necessary, to his own glory and to the future happiness of mankind" His mind seems at this time to have been perplexed with some obscure notion of the unscriptural doctrines of meritorious sufferings, and of the external authority of Jesus Christ ; which, however, he regards as a mystery, which "it will probably never be given to man in the present state" to understand, and which, therefore, "must consequently be ranked among those articles, the belief of which cannot be necessary to salvation,"' p. 327.

Though the Apostles have affirmed the exaltation of the Saviour to the government of the universe, in every variety of form which language can supply ; though he himself declared that all power was given to him in heaven and in earth, his possession of external authority is unblushingly asserted to be an unscriptural tenet. We challenge Mr. B. to invent terms more strongly expressive of the highest dominion and authority, than those which the inspired writers have employed in describing the exaltation of the Saviour. We can regard this assertion of Mr. Belsham's, in no other light than as a specimen of that theological audacity which forms the principal feature in that gentleman's character, and which happily can have no other effect than to inspire a complete abhorrence of the system which renders such a procedure necessary. We cheerfully accept, however, the concession implied in these daring positions, that the doctrine of the meritorious sufferings of Christ is inseparably connected with his exaltation ; and as the latter cannot, without the utmost indecency, be denied, the former follows of course. We can annex no other meaning to the epithet external, as applied to *authority*, than what might be more clearly expressed by the term personal ; or, in other words, Mr. B.'s intention is to assert, that our Lord possesses no authority whatever, apart from the credit due to his mission and to his doctrine, and that the Christian church is in no other sense governed by Christ, than the Jews might be affirmed to be governed by Moses after his decease. It must be obvious, however, to every one, that this is not to explain, but boldly and unequivocally to contradict, the writings of the Apostles on this important subject.

We shall close these strictures on Mr. Belsham, by quoting one passage more, which illustrates at once, his insufferable arrogance, and his servile deference to authority.

'What childish simplicity and ignorance,' says he, 'does it betray in some, to feign or to feel alarmed at the tendency of those doctrines which are avowed by such men as Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb, and which are represented by them as lying at the foundation of all right views of the divine government, of all rational piety and virtuous practice, and of all rational and substantial consolation! And yet such persons feel no alarm at the vulgar notion of philosophical liberty, or the power of acting differently in circumstances precisely similar; a notion, the fond persuasion of which encourages men to venture into circumstances of moral danger, and to which thousands of the young and inexperienced especially are daily falling victims.' p. 394.

The arrogance, folly, and absurdity of this passage, are scarcely to be paralleled, even in the writings of its inimitable author. The most celebrated metaphysicians and reasoners, in every age and in every country, Malebranche, Cudworth, Clarke, Butler, Reid, Chillingworth, and innumerable others, who have avowed the strongest apprehensions of the immoral tendency of the doctrine of fatalism, or, as it has been styled, of philosophical necessity, are consigned by a writer, who has not capacity sufficient to appreciate their powers, much less to rival their productions, to the reproach of childish simplicity and ignorance; and this for no other reason than their presuming to differ in opinion from Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb! What is this but to enjoin implicit faith? and why might not a Roman Catholic, with equal propriety, accuse of childish simplicity and ignorance, those who should suspect the pernicious tendency of sentiments held by Pascal, Fenelon, and Bossuet? We must be permitted to remind Mr. B. that we hold his pretensions to a liberal and independent turn of thought extremely cheap; that possessing nothing original even in his opinions, to say nothing of his genius, his most vigorous efforts have terminated in his becoming a mere train-bearer, in a very insignificant procession.

Having already detained our readers longer on this article than we ought, we should now put a period to

our remarks, but that there is one particular connected with the history of Mr. Lindsey, which we conceive, has been too often set in such a light as is calculated to produce erroneous impressions. We refer to the resignation of his livings in deference to his religious scruples. He is, on this account, every where designated by Mr. Belsham by the title of 'the venerable Confessor ; and what is more to be wondered at, the late excellent Job Orton, in a letter to his friend, the late Rev. Mr. Palmer of Hackney, speaks of him in the following terms :

'Were I to publish an account of silenced and ejected ministers, I should be strongly tempted to insert Mr. Lindsey in the list, which he mentions in his Apology with so much veneration. He certainly deserves as much respect and honour as any of them, for the part he has acted. Perhaps few of them exceeded him in learning and piety. I venerate him as I would any of your confessors. As to his particular sentiments, they are nothing to me. An honest pious man, who makes such a sacrifice to truth and conscience as he has done, is a glorious character, and deserves the respect, esteem, and veneration of every true Christian.'

We have no scruple in asserting that this unqualified encomium is repugnant to reason, to scripture, and to the sentiments of the best and purest ages of the Christian church. To pass over the absurdity of denominating Mr. L. a silenced and ejected minister, merely on account of his voluntary withdrawal from a community whose distinguishing tenets he had abandoned, we are far from conceiving that the merit attached to his conduct on this occasion, was of such an order as to entitle him for a moment to rank with confessors and martyrs. To the praise of manly integrity for quitting a situation he could no longer conscientiously retain, we are ready to acknowledge Mr. L. fully entitled. We are cordially disposed to admire integrity, wherever we perceive it ; and we admire it the more in the present instance, because such examples of it, among benefi-

ed ecclesiastics, have been rare. But we cannot permit ourselves to place sacrifices to error on the same footing as sacrifices to truth, without annihilating their distinction. If revealed truth possess any thing of sanctity and importance, the profession of it must be more meritorious than the profession of its opposite ; and, by consequence, sacrifices made to that profession must be more estimable. He who suffers in the cause of truth is entitled to admiration ; he who suffers in the defence of error and delusion, to our commiseration ; which are unquestionably very different sentiments. If truth is calculated to elevate and sanctify the character, he who cheerfully sacrifices his worldly emolument to its pursuit, must be supposed to have participated, in no common degree, of its salutary operation. He who suffers equal privations in the propagation of error, evinces, it is confessed, his possession of moral honesty ; but unless persuasion could convert error into truth, it is impossible it should impart to error the effects of truth. Previous to the profession of any tenets whatever, there lies an obligation on all to whom the light of the gospel extends, to believe the truth. We are bound to confess Christ before men, only because we are bound to believe on him. But if, instead of believing on him, we deny him in his essential characters, which is the case with Socinians, the sincerity of that denial will indeed rescue us from the guilt of prevarication, but not from that of unbelief. It is possible, at least, since some sort of faith in Christ is positively asserted to be essential to salvation, that the tenets of the Socinians may be such as to exclude that faith : that it does exclude it, no orthodox man can consistently deny ; and how absurd it were to suppose a man should be entitled to the reward of a Christian confessor, merely for denying, *bona fide*, the doctrine which is essential to salvation ! The sincerity which accompanies his pro-

fession, entitles him to the reward of a confessor : the error of the doctrine which he professes, exposes him, at the same time, to the sentence of condemnation as an unbeliever ! If we lose sight of Socinianism for a moment, and suppose an unbeliever in Christianity *in toto*, to suffer for the voluntary and sincere promulgation of his tenets, we would ask Mr. Orton, in what rank he would be inclined to place his infidel confessor. Is *he* entitled to rank with *any* of the confessors ? If he is, our Saviour's terms of salvation are essentially altered, and though he pronounces an anathema on him who shall deny him before men, the sturdy and unshaken denial of him in the face of worldly discouragement, would answer, it seems, as well as a similar confession. Men are left at their liberty in this respect, and they are equally secure of eternal happiness, whether they deny, or whether they confess, the Saviour, providing they do it firmly and sincerely. If these consequences appear shocking, and he be forced to assert the negative, then it is admitted that the truth of the doctrine confessed, enters essentially into the inquiry, whether he who suffers for his opinions, is to be, *ipso facto*, classed with Christian confessors. Let it be remembered, that we are not denying that he who hazards his worldly interest, rather than conceal or dissemble his tenets, how false or dangerous soever they may be, is an honest man, and, *quoad hoc*, acts a virtuous part ; but that he is entitled to the same kind of approbation with the champion of truth. That the view we have taken of the subject is consonant to the scriptures, will not be doubted by those who recollect that St. John rests his attachment to Gaius and to the elect Lady, on the truth which dwelt in them ; that he professed no Christian attachment, but for the truth's sake ; and that he forbade Christians to exercise hospitality, or to shew the least indication of friendship, to those who taught any other doctrine than that which he and his

fellow apostles had taught. The source of the confusion and absurdity which necessarily attach to the opinions of Mr. Orton and others, here expressed on this subject, consists in their confounding together, moral sincerity and Christian piety. We are perfectly willing to admit, that the latter cannot subsist without the former ; but we are equally certain that the former is by no means so comprehensive as necessarily to include the latter. We should have imagined it unnecessary to enter into an elaborate defence of so plain a position as this, that it is one thing to be what the world styles an honest man, and another to be a Christian—a distinction, obvious as it is, sufficient to solve the whole mystery, and to account for the conduct of Mr. L. without adopting the unmeaning jargon of his biographer, who styles him, in innumerable places, the *venerable confessor*. How repugnant the language we have been endeavouring to expose, is to that which was held in the purest and best ages of the church, must be obvious to all who are competently acquainted with ecclesiastical history. The Marcionites, we are informed by Eusebius, boasted of their having furnished a multitude of martyrs, but they were not the less on that account considered as deniers of Christ. Hence, when orthodox Christians happened occasionally to meet at the places of martyrdom with Montanists and Manichæans, they refused to hold the least communion with them, lest they should be supposed to consent to their errors.* In a word, the *nature* of the doctrine professed must be taken into consideration, before we can determine that profession to be a Christian profession ; nor is martyrdom entitled to the high veneration justly bestowed on acts of heroic piety, on any other ground than its being, what the term imports, an *attestation of the truth*. It is the saint which makes the martyr, not the martyr the saint.

* Euseb. L. 5. C. 14.

REVIEW.

A Summary of the Principles and History of Popery, in Five Lectures, on the Pretensions and Abuses of the Church of Rome. By JOHN BART. 8vo. pp. 176.

AT a time when Popery is making rapid strides, and Protestants in general have lost the zeal which once animated them, we consider the publication we have just announced as peculiarly seasonable. What may be the ultimate effect of the efforts made by the adherents of the Church of Rome to propagate its tenets, aided by the apathy of the opposite party, it is not for us to conjecture. Certain it is, there never was a period when the members of the papal community were so active and enterprising, or Protestants so torpid and indifferent. Innumerable symptoms appear, of prevailing disposition to contemplate the doctrines of Popery with less disgust, and to witness their progress with less alarm, than has ever been known since the Reformation. All the zeal and activity are on one side; and while every absurdity is retained, and every pretension defended, which formerly drew upon Popery the indignation and abhorrence of all enlightened Christians, we should be ready to conclude, from the altered state of public feeling, that a system once so obnoxious had undergone some momentous revolution. We seem,

on this occasion, to have interpreted, in its most literal sense, the injunction of "hoping all things, and believing all things." We persist in maintaining that the adherents to Popery are materially changed, in contradiction to their express disavowal; and while they make a boast of the infallibility of their creed, and the unalterable nature of their religion, we persist in the belief of its having experienced we know not what melioration and improvement. In most instances, when men are deceived, it is the effect of art and contrivance on the part of those who delude them: in this, the deception originates with ourselves; and instead of bearing *false* witness against our neighbour, such is the excess of our candour, that we refuse to credit the unfavourable testimony which he bears of himself.

There is, in the mean time, nothing reciprocal in this strange method of proceeding: we pipe to them, but they will not dance. Our concessions, instead of softening and mollifying, seem to have no other effect upon them, than to elate their pride and augment their arrogance.

An equal change in the state of feeling towards an object which has itself undergone no alteration whatever, and where the party by which it is displayed profess to adhere to their ancient tenets, it would be difficult to specify. To inquire into the causes of this singular phenomenon, would lead to discussion foreign to our present purpose. Let it suffice to remark, that it may partly be ascribed to the length of time which has elapsed since we have had actual experience of the enormous cruelties of the papal system, and to the fancied security we possess against their recurrence; partly to the agitation of a great political question, which seems to have had the effect of identifying the cause of Popery with that of Protestant Dissenters. The impression of the past has in a manner spent itself;

and in many, its place is occupied by an eagerness to grasp at present advantages, and to lay hold of every expedient for shaking off the restraints which a narrow and timid policy has imposed. The influence of these circumstances has been much aided by that indifference to religious truth, which too often shelters itself under the mask of candour ; and to such an extent has this humour been carried, that distinguished leaders in Parliament have not scrupled to represent the controversy between the Papists and the Protestants as turning on obscure and unintelligible points of doctrine, scarcely worth the attention of enlightened minds ; while a benefited clergyman of some distinction, has treated the whole subject as of no more importance than the idle disputes agitated by the schoolmen. It was but a few years since, that a celebrated nobleman, in the House of Peers, vehemently condemned the oath of abjuration for applying the term *superstitious* to the doctrine of transubstantiation. In exactly the same spirit, the appellation of Papist is exchanged for Catholic,—a concession which the adherents of the Church of Rome well know how to improve, as amounting to little short of a formal surrender of the point at issue. For, if the Papists are really entitled to the name of *Catholics*, Protestants of every denomination are involved in the guilt of schism.

This revolution in the feelings of a great portion of the public, has probably been not a little promoted by another cause. The present times are eminently distinguished by the efforts employed for the extension of vital religion : each denomination of Christians has taken its station, and contributed its part toward the diffusion of evangelical sentiments. The consequence has been, that the professors of serious piety are multiplied, and form at present a very conspicuous branch of the community. The space which they occupy in

the minds of the public, is not merely proportioned to their numerical importance, still less to their rank in society. It is in a great measure derived from the publicity of their proceedings, and the numerous associations for the promotion of pious and benevolent objects, which they have originated and supported. By these means, their discriminating doctrines, essential to vital piety, have become better known, and more fully discussed than heretofore. However beneficial, as to its general effects, such a state of things may have been, one consequence, which might be expected, has been the result. The opposition of the enemies of religion has become so virulent, their hatred more heated and inflamed, and they have turned with no small complacency to the contemplation of a system, which forms a striking contrast to the object of their detestation. Popery, in the ordinary state of its profession, combines the "form of godliness" with a total denial of its power. A heap of unmeaning ceremonies, adapted to fascinate the imagination, and engage the senses,—implicit faith in human authority, combined with an utter neglect of Divine teaching,—ignorance the most profound, joined to dogmatism the most presumptuous,—a vigilant exclusion of biblical knowledge, together with a total extinction of free inquiry,—present the spectacle of religion lying in state, surrounded with the silent pomp of death. The very absurdities of such a religion render it less unacceptable to men whose decided hostility to truth inclines them to view with complacency, whatever obscures its beauty, or impedes its operation. Of all the corruptions of Christianity which have prevailed to any considerable extent, Popery presents the most numerous points of contrast to the simple doctrines of the gospel; and just in proportion as it gains ground, the religion of Christ must decline.

On these accounts, though we are far from suppos-

ing that Popery, were it triumphant, would allow toleration to any denomination of Protestants, we have the utmost confidence, that the professors of evangelical piety would be its first victims. The party most opposed to them, look to Papists as their natural ally, on whose assistance, in the suppression of what they are pleased to denominate fanaticism and enthusiasm, they may always depend; they may, therefore, without presumption, promise themselves the distinction conferred on Ulysses, that of being last devoured.

Whether Popery will ever be permitted, in the inscrutable counsels of Heaven, again to darken and overspread the land, is an inquiry in which it is foreign in our province to engage. It is certain that the members of the Romish community, are at this moment on the tip-toe of expectation, indulging the most sanguine hopes, suggested by the temper of the times, of soon recovering all that they have lost, and of seeing the pretended rights of their church restored in their full splendour. If any thing can realize such an expectation, it is undoubtedly the torpor and indifference of Protestants, combined with the incredible zeal and activity of Papists; and universal observation shews what these are capable of effecting,—how often they compensate the disadvantages arising from paucity of number, as well as almost every kind of inequality.

From a settled persuasion that Popery still is, what it always was, a detestable system of impiety, cruelty, and imposture, fabricated by the father of lies, we feel thankful at witnessing any judicious attempt to expose its enormities, and retard its progress. The Lectures published some years since by Mr. Fletcher, are well adapted for this purpose, and entitle their excellent Author to the esteem and gratitude of the public. "*The Protestant*," a series of periodical papers composed by Mr. Mc Gavin, of Glasgow, contains the

fullest delineation of the popish system, and the most powerful confutation of its principles in a popular style, of any work we have seen. Whoever wishes to see Popery drawn to the life in its hideous wickedness and deformity, will find abundant satisfaction in the pages of that writer.

The Author before us has been studious of conciseness, and has contented himself with exhibiting a brief, but a very correct and impressive outline of that copious subject. As these lectures were delivered at Manchester, it is probable the Author's attention was more immediately directed to it, by witnessing the alarming progress which the tenets of the Romish Church are making in that quarter. There is nothing in them, however, of a local nature, or which is calculated to limit their usefulness to any particular part of the kingdom. They are adapted for universal perusal, and entitled to an extensive circulation.

The First Lecture is on the claim of the Church of Rome to the appellation of *catholic*; the futility and absurdity of which the Author has confuted, in a concise but highly satisfactory manner. On this part of the argument, he very acutely remarks, "That no church which is not coeval with Christianity itself, ought to pretend to be the universal Christian Church."

'The contrary sentiment is evidently unreasonable and absurd; for it supposes, that something which has already a distinct and complete existence, may be a part of something else which is not to come into being until a future period; or, which is equivalent to this, that what is entirely the creation of to-day, may include that which was created yesterday. This would be in opposition to all analogy; and therefore, if the Church of Rome had not an earlier commencement than all other Christian Churches,—if the origin of that Church be not coincident and simultaneous with the first moment of Christianity, then the pretension of the Church of Rome to be the "Catholic Church," is altogether vain. Now, it is clear, from the Acts of the Apostles, that many Christian Churches flourished in the East, before the Gospel was even preached at Rome. It was enjoined on the Apostles that their ministry should

begin at Jerusalem, and in that city, the first Christian church was actually constituted. Until the persecution which arose about the stoning of Stephen, Christ was not preached beyond the borders of Palestine, and even then, with a scrupulous discrimination, "to the Jews only." In fact, churches were formed in Jerusalem and Judea, at Damascus and Antioch, and the gospel was sent even into Ethiopia, before there is any evidence of its being known at Rome.' pp. 10, 11.

The Second Lecture is an historical exposition of the principal events which led to the elevation of the Church of Rome to supremacy: in tracing these, much acumen is evinced, as well as an intimate acquaintance with ecclesiastical history.

The Third Lecture consists of a masterly delineation of the genius and characteristics of the papal ascendancy. In this part of the work, the judicious Author enters deeply into the interior spirit of Popery. After setting in a striking light, the seeming impossibilities it had to encounter ere it could accomplish its object, he enumerates the expedients employed for this purpose, under the following heads. The votaries of the papal see succeeded, 1. By enslaving the mental faculties to human authority.—2. By giving to superstition the semblance and sanction of religion.—3. By administering the affairs of their government on the corruptest principles of worldly policy. Each of these topics is illustrated with great judgement, and a copious induction of facts. On the last of these heads, we beg leave to present to our readers the following extract, as a specimen of the style and spirit of this writer.

"My kingdom is *not* of this world," saith our Lord; "My kingdom *is* of this world," is truly the sentiment of the Pope; and here lies the difference. The only consistent view of this Church, is that of a political establishment, employing indeed religious terms and denominations, but only as the pretext and colour of an inordinate pursuit of secular and temporal objects. Read its history as that of a Christian Church, you stumble at every step, and every period shocks you with the grossest incongruities: read the same history as of one of the kingdoms of this world, all is natural and

easy, and the various proceedings and events are just what you are prepared to expect. The papal supremacy was conceded by an earthly monarch—all its interests have varied with the fluctuations of human affairs—and when the princes of this world shall withdraw their support, it will fall, and great will be the fall thereof. The Bishops of Rome have ever pursued, under the guise of religion, some earthly advantage; and thus Pope Leo the Tenth exclaimed most appropriately, "Oh how profitable has this fable of Jesus been unto us!"

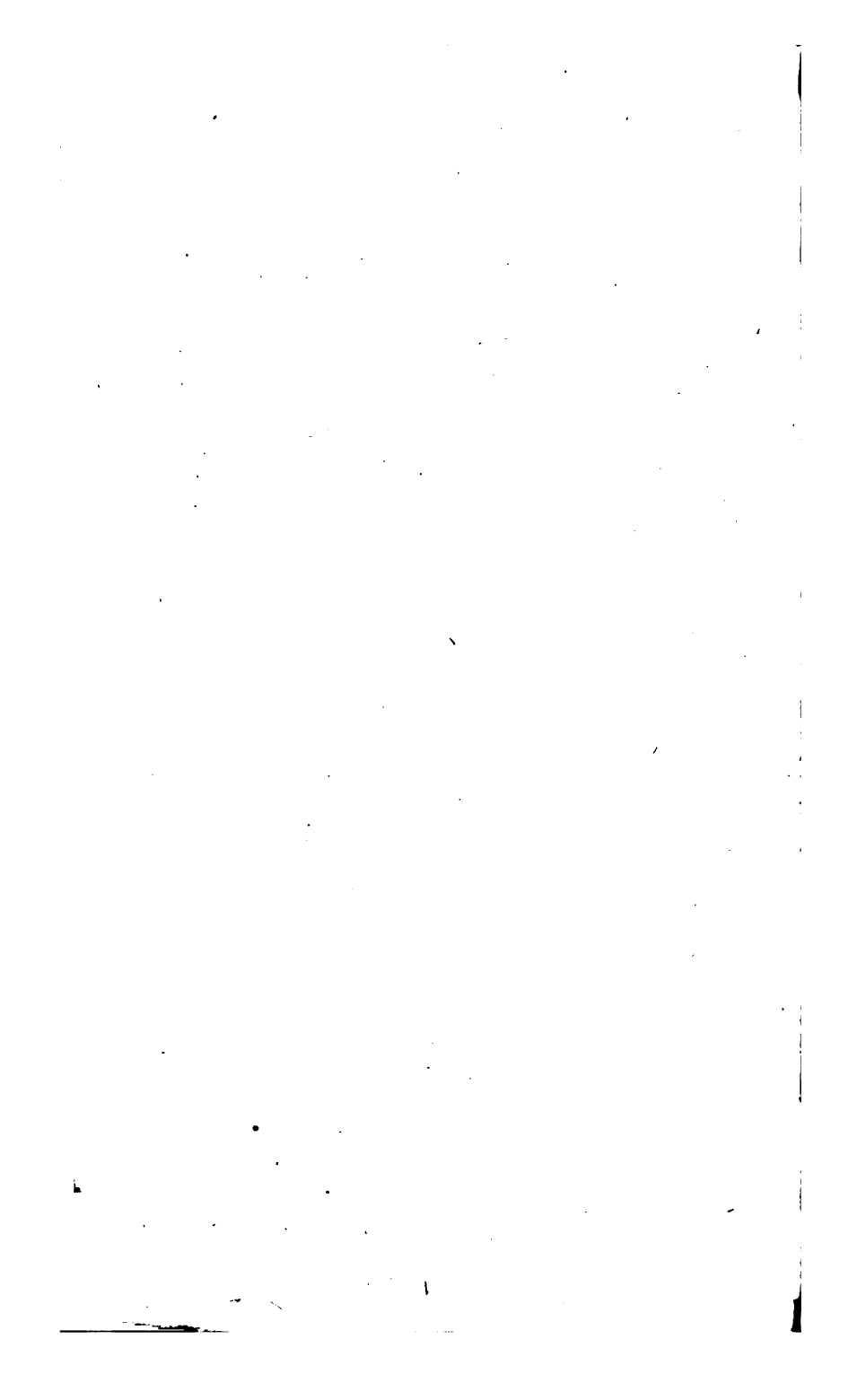
'The first object of these subtle politicians, was to provide a revenue, ample and permanent. Kings and nations were accordingly laid under tribute, and to the utmost extent of papal influence, the treasures of Christendom flowed into the Exchequer of Rome. On every hand, art, fraud, and intimidation, were equally and successfully employed, in transferring the wealth of the world to the coffers of the church.

'This was effected partly by regular ecclesiastical taxes, but principally by selling every thing the Church of Rome had to bestow, and by perpetually inventing new articles of bargain and sale. Hence the multiplying of sacraments; hence the sale of pardons, indulgences, benefices, dignities, and of prayers for the living and the dead. Every thing was prostituted: and under the pretence of being the "bride, the Lamb's wife," this church became the "mother of harlots." In the same spirit, the death-beds of the rich were besieged, that they might bequeath their property to the Clergy; and the consciences of opulent criminals were appeased, in return for liberal donations to ecclesiastical funds. Thus an amount of riches almost incredible accrued to the papal treasury.' pp. 94—96.

The Fourth Lecture is occupied by giving a rapid sketch of the most interesting events in the past history of the Romish community. We have seldom, if ever, seen so large a body of facts exhibited with perfect perspicuity within so small a compass: The Author's complete mastery of the subject appears from the ease with which he has condensed an immense mass of historical matter, without the least indication of disorder or confusion.

The last of these Lectures presents an animated and instructive view of the prospects which are opening on the Christian Church, and the probable issue of the causes and events which are in present operation.

The notice we have taken of this publication will, we trust, induce our readers to avail themselves of the instruction and the pleasure which an attentive perusal cannot fail to bestow. It is distinguished for precision and comprehension of thought, energy of diction, and the most enlarged and enlightened principles of civil and religious freedom; nor should we find it easy to name a publication which contains, within the same compass, so much information on the subject which it professes to treat. A little redundance of ornament, and excess in the employment of figurative language, are excrescences very pardonable in a young writer, and which more mature years and experience may be safely left to correct. On the whole, we cannot dismiss the work before us, without sincerely congratulating the Author on that happy combination of philosophical discrimination with Christian piety, which it throughout displays.



AN
APOLOGY
FOR THE
FREEDOM OF THE PRESS,
AND FOR
GENERAL LIBERTY:

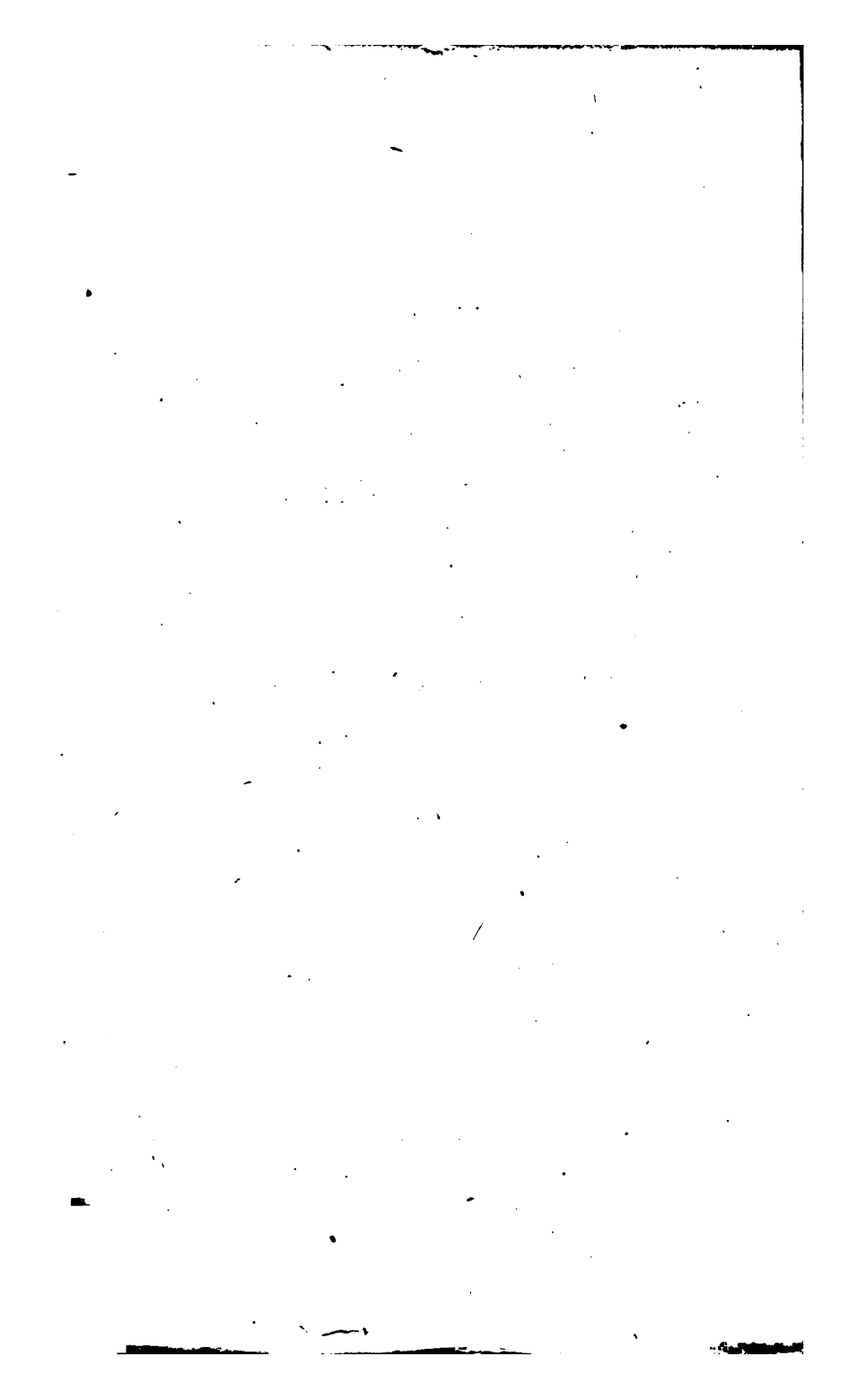
TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,
REMARKS ON
BISHOP HORSLEY'S SERMON,

PREACHED JANUARY 30, 1793.

—
BY ROBERT HALL, M. A.
—

Shall Truth be silent, because Folly strowns?—Young.

FROM THE SEVENTH LONDON EDITION.



ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

SINCE this pamphlet was first published, the principles it aims to support have received confirmation from such a train of disastrous events, that it might have been hoped we should have learned those lessons from misfortunes, which reason had failed to impress. Uninstructed by our calamities, we still persist in an impious attack on the liberties of France, and are eager to take our part in the great drama of crimes which is acting on the continent of Europe. Meantime the violence and injustice of the internal administration keeps pace with our iniquities abroad. Liberty and truth are silenced. An unrelenting system of prosecution prevails. The cruel and humiliating sentence passed upon Mr. MUIR and Mr. PALMER, men of unblemished morals and of the purest patriotism, the outrages committed on Dr. PRIESTLEY, and his intended removal to America, are events which will mark the latter end of the eighteenth century with indelible reproach. But what has liberty to expect from a minister, who has the audacity to assert the King's right to land as many foreign troops as he pleases, without the previous consent of Parliament! If this doctrine be true, the boasted equilibrium of the constitution, all the barriers which the wisdom of our ancestors have opposed to the encroachments of arbitrary power, are idle, ineffectual precautions. For we have only to suppose for a moment, an inclination in the royal breast to overturn our liberties, and of what avail is the nicest internal arrangement against a foreign force? Our constitution, on this principle, is the absurdest system that was ever conceived; pretending liberty for its object, yet providing no security against the great antagonist and destroyer of liberty, the employment of military power by the chief magistrate. Let a foreign army be introduced into this or any other country, and quartered upon the subject without his consent, and what is there wanting, if such were the design of the prince, to complete the subjection of that country? Will armed foreigners be overawed by written laws, or unwritten customs, by the legal limitations of power, the paper lines of demarkation? But Mr. PITT contends, that though the sovereign may land foreign troops at his pleasure, he cannot subsist them without the aid of Parliament. He may overrun his dominions with a mercenary army, it seems, but after he has subdued his subjects, he is compelled to have recourse to them for supplies. What a happy contrivance! Unfortunately, however, it is found that princes with the unlimited

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command of armies, have hit upon a nearer and more efficacious method of raising supplies than by an act of Parliament. But it is needless any farther to expose the effrontery, or detect the sophistry, of this shameless apostate. The character of Pitt is written in sun beams. A veteran in frauds while in the bloom of youth, betraying first, and then persecuting his earliest friends and connexions, falsifying every promise, and violating every political engagement, ever making the fairest professions a prelude to the darkest actions, punishing with the utmost rigour the publisher of the identical paper he himself had circulated,* are traits in the conduct of Pitt, which entitle him to a fatal pre-eminence in guilt. The qualities of this man balance in an extraordinary manner, and sustain each other: the influence of his station, the extent of his enormities invest him with a kind of splendour, and the contempt we feel for his meanness and duplicity, is lost in the dread of his machinations, and the abhorrence of his crimes. Too long has he insulted the patience of his countrymen; nor ought we, when we observe the indifference with which the iniquities of Pitt's administration are viewed, to reproach the Romans for tamely submitting to the tyranny of Caligula or Domitian.

We had fondly hoped a mild philosophy was about to diffuse over the globe, the triumph of liberty and peace. But, alas! these hopes are fled. The Continent presents little but one wide picture of desolation, misery, and crimes: *on the earth distress of nations and perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.*

That the seeds of public convulsions are sown in every country of Europe (our own not excepted) it were vain to deny; seeds which, without the wisest precautions, and the most conciliating counsels, will break out, it is to be feared, in the overthrow of all governments. How this catastrophe may be averted, or how, should that be impossible, its evils may be mitigated and diminished, demands the deepest consideration of every European statesman. The ordinary routine of ministerial chicanery is quite unequal to the task. A philosophic comprehension of mind, which, leaving the beaten road of politics, shall adapt itself to new situations, and profit by the vicissitudes of opinion, equally removed from an attachment to antiquated forms, and useless innovations, capable of rising above the emergency of the moment, to the most remote consequences of a transaction; combining the past, the present, and the future, and knowing how to defend with firmness, or concede with dignity; these are the qualities which the situation of Europe renders indispensable. It would be a mockery of our present ministry to ask whether *they* possess those qualities.

With respect to the following apology for the freedom of the press, the author begs leave to claim the reader's indulgence to its numerous imperfections, and hopes he will recollect, as an excuse for the warmth of his expressions, it is an eulogium on a *dead friend*.

* Mr. Holt, a printer, at Newark, is now imprisoned in Newgate for two years, for reprinting verbatim, An Address to the People on Reform, which was sanctioned for certain, and probably written by, the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt.

ORIGINAL PREFACE.

THE accidental detention of the following pamphlet in the press longer than was expected, gave me an opportunity before it was published, of seeing Bishop HORSLEY'S Sermon, preached before the House of Lords, on the 30th of January, and as its contents are relevant to my subject, a few remarks upon it may not be improper.—His Lordship sets out with a severe censure of that "*freedom of dispute,*" on matters of "*such high importance as the origin of government, and the authority of sovereigns,*" in which he laments, it has been the "*folly of this country for several years past,*" to indulge. If his Lordship has not inquired into those subjects himself, he can with little propriety pretend, to decide in so imperious and peremptory a manner; unless it be a privilege of his office to dogmatise without examination, or he has discovered some nearer road to truth than that of reasoning and argument.—It seems a favourite point with a certain description of men, to stop the progress of inquiry, and throw mankind back into the darkness of the middle ages, from a persuasion, that ignorance will augment their power, as objects look largest in a mist. There is in reality no other foundation for that alarm, which the Bishop expresses. Whatever is not comprehended under revelation, falls under the inspection of reason; and since from the whole course of providence,

it is evident, that all political events, and all the revolutions of government, are affected by the instrumentality of men, there is no room for supposing them too sacred to be submitted to the human faculties. The more minds there are employed in tracing their principles and effects, the greater probability will there be of the science of civil policy, as well as every other, attaining to perfection.

Bishop Horsley, determined to preserve the character of an original, presents us with a new set of political principles, and endeavours to place the exploded doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance upon a new foundation. By a curious distinction between the *ground* of authority and obedience, he rests the former on human compact, the latter on divine obligation. "*It is easy to understand,*" he says, "*that the principle of the private citizen's submission, must be quite a distinct thing from the principle of the sovereign's public title. And for this plain reason: The principle of submission to bind the conscience of every individual must be something universally known.*" He then proceeds to inform us, that the kingly title in England is founded on the act of settlement; but that as thousands and tens of thousands of the people have never heard of that act, the principle which compels their allegiance, must be something distinct from it, with which they may all be acquainted. In this reasoning, he evidently confounds the obligation of an *individual* to submit to the existing authority, with that of the community collectively considered. For *any particular number* of persons to set themselves by force to oppose the established practice of a state, is a plain violation of the laws of morality, as it would be productive of the utmost disorder; and no government could stand, were it permitted to individuals, to counteract the general will, of which, in ordinary cases, le-

gal usages are the interpreter. In the worst state of political society, if a people have not sufficient wisdom or courage to correct its evils and assert their liberty, the attempt of individuals to *force* improvements upon them, is a presumption which merits the severest punishment.—Social order would be inevitably dissolved, if every man declined a practical acquiescence in that political regulation which he did not personally approve. The duty of submission is, in this light, founded on principles which hold under every government, and are plain and obvious. But the principle which attaches a people to their allegiance, collectively considered, must exactly coincide with the title to authority ; as must be evident from the very meaning of the term authority, which, as distinguished from force, signifies a right to demand obedience. Authority and obedience are correlative terms, and consequently in all respects correspond, and are commensurate with each other.

“*The divine right,*” his Lordship says, “*of the first magistrate in every polity to the citizen’s obedience, is not of that sort which it were high treason to claim for the sovereign of this country. It is a right which in no country can be denied, without the highest of all treasons. The denial of it were treason against the paramount authority of God.*” To invest any human power with these high epithets, is ridiculous at least, if not impious. The right of a prince to the obedience of his subjects, wherever it exists, may be called divine, because we know the Divine Being is the patron of justice and order ; but in that sense, the authority of a petty constable is equally divine ; nor can the term be applied with any greater propriety to supreme than to subordinate magistrates. As to “*submission being among the general rules which proceed from the will of God, and have been impressed upon*

the conscience of every man by the original constitution of the world," nothing more is comprehended under this pomp of words, than that submission is, for the most part, a duty—a sublime and interesting discovery! The minds of princes are seldom of the firmest texture; and they who fill their heads with the magnificent chimera of divine right, prepare a victim, where they intend a god. Some species of government is essential to the well-being of mankind; submission to some species of government is consequently a duty; but what kind of government shall be appointed, and to what limits submission shall extend, are mere human questions, to be adjusted by mere human reason and contrivance.

As the natural consequence of divine right, his Lordship proceeds to inculcate the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, in the most unqualified terms; assuming it as a principle to be acted upon under governments the most oppressive, in which he endeavours to shelter himself under the authority of Paul. The apostolic exhortation, as addressed to a few individuals, and adapted to the local circumstances of Christians at that period, admits an easy solution; but to imagine it prescribes the duty of the Roman empire, and is intended to subject millions to the capricious tyranny of one man, is a reflection as well on the character of Paul, as on Christianity itself.

On principles of reason, the only way to determine the agreement of any thing with the will of God, is to consider its influence on the happiness of society; so that in this view, the question of passive obedience is reduced to a simple issue: Is it best for the human race that every tyrant and usurper be submitted to without check or control? It ought likewise to be remembered, that if the doctrine of passive obedience be true, princes should be taught it, and instructed,

that to whatever excesses of cruelty and caprice they proceed, they may expect no resistance on the part of the people. If this maxim appear to be conducive to general good, we may fairly presume it concurs with the will of the Deity ; but if it appear pregnant with the most mischievous consequences, it must disclaim such support. From the known perfection of God, we conclude he wills the happiness of mankind ; and that though he condescends not to interpose miraculously, that kind of civil polity is most pleasing in his eye, which is productive of the greatest felicity.

On a comparison of free with arbitrary governments, we perceive the former are distinguished from the latter, by imparting a much greater share of happiness to those who live under them ; and this in a manner too uniform to be imputed to chance or secret causes. He who wills the end, must will the means which ascertain it. His Lordship endeavours to diminish the dread of despotic government, by observing, that in its worst state, it is attended with more good than ill, and that the "*end of government under all its abuses is generally answered by it.*" Admitting this to be true, it is at best but a consolation proper to be applied where there is no remedy, and affords no reason why we should not mitigate political as well as other evils, when it lies in our power. We endeavour to correct the diseases of the eye, or of any other organ, though the malady be not such as renders it useless.

The doctrine of passive obedience is so repugnant to the genuine feelings of human nature, that it can never be completely acted on : a secret dread that popular vengeance will awake, and nature assert her rights, imposes a restraint, which the most determined despotism is not able to shake off. The rude reason of the multitude may be perplexed, but the sentiments of the heart are not easily perverted.

In adjusting the different parts of this theory, the learned Bishop appears a good deal embarrassed. "*It will readily be admitted,*" he says, (p. 9.) "*that of all sovereigns, none reign by so fair and just a title, as those who derive their claim from some such public act (as the act of settlement) of the nation which they govern.*" That there are different degrees in *justice* and even in *divine right*, (which his Lordship declares all sovereigns possess) is a very singular idea. Common minds would be ready to imagine, however various the modes of *injustice* may be, *justice* were a thing absolute and invariable, nor would they conceive, how "*a divine right, a right the denial of which is high treason against the authority of God,*" can be increased by the act of a nation. But this is not all. It is no just inference (he tells us) that the obligation upon the private citizen to submit himself to the authority thus raised, arises wholly from the act of the people conferring it, or from their compact with the person on whom it is conferred. But if the sovereign derives his claim from this act of the nation, how comes it that the obligation of the people to submit to his claim, does not spring from the same act? Because "*in all these causes, he affirms, the act of the people is only the means which Providence employs to advance the new sovereign to his station.*" In the hand of the Supreme Being, the whole agency of men may be considered as an *instrument*; but to make it appear that the right of dominion is independent of the people, men must be shewn to be instruments in political affairs, in a more absolute sense than ordinary. A divine interposition of a more immediate kind, must be shewn, or the mere consideration of God's being the original source of all power, will be a weak reason for absolute submission. Anarchy may have *power* as well as despotism, and is equally a link in the great chain of causes and effects.

It is not a little extraordinary, that Bishop Horsley, the apologist of tyranny, the patron of passive obedience, should affect to admire the British constitution, whose freedom was attained by a palpable violation of the principles for which he contends. He will not say the Barons at Runnamede acted on his maxims, in extorting the magna charta from King John, or in demanding its confirmation from Henry the Third. If he approves of their conduct, he gives up his cause, and is compelled at least to confess the principles of passive obedience were not true at that time ; if he disapproves of their conduct, he must, to be consistent, reprobate the restraints which it imposed on kingly power. The limitations of monarchy, which his Lordship pretends to applaud, were effected by resistance ; the freedom of the British constitution flowed from a departure from passive obedience, and was therefore stained with high treason "*against the authority of God.*" To these conclusions he must inevitably come, unless he can point out something peculiar to the spot of Runnamede, or to the reign of King John, which confines the exception to the general doctrine of submission, to that particular time and place. With whatever colours the advocates of passive obedience may varnish their theories, they must of necessity be enemies to the British constitution. Its spirit they detest ; its corruptions they cherish ; and if at present they affect a zeal for its preservation, it is only because they despair of any form of government being erected in its stead, which will give equal permanence to abuses. Afraid to destroy it at once, they take a malignant pleasure in seeing it waste by degrees under the pressure of internal malady.

Whatever bears the semblance of *reasoning*, in Bishop Horsley's discourse, will be found, I trust, to have received a satisfactory answer ; but to animadvert with a becoming severity on the temper it displays, is a less

easy task. To render him the justice he deserves in that respect, would demand all the fierceness of his character.

We owe him an acknowledgment for the frankness with which he avows his decided preference of the clergy of France to dissenters in England ;—a sentiment we have often suspected, but have seldom had the satisfaction of seeing openly professed before.

"None," he asserts, "*at this season, are more entitled to our offices of love, than those with whom the difference is wide in points of doctrine, discipline, and external rites ; those venerable exiles the prelates and clergy of the fallen church of France.*" Far be it from me to intercept the compassion of the humane from the unhappy of any nation, tongue, or people ; but the extreme tenderness he professes for the fallen church of France, is well contrasted by his malignity towards dissenters. Bishop Horsley is a man of sense ; and though doctrine, discipline, and external rites, comprehend the whole of Christianity ; his tender, sympathetic heart is superior to prejudice, and never fails to recognize, in a persecutor, a friend and a brother.—Admirable consistence in a Protestant Bishop, to lament over the fallen of that antichrist, whose overthrow is represented by unerring inspiration, as an event the most splendid and happy ! It is a shrewd presumption against the utility of religious establishments that they too often become seats of intolerance, instigators to persecution, nurseries of Bonners and of Horsleys.

His Lordship closes his invective against dissenters, and Dr. Priestley in particular, by presenting a prayer in the spirit of an indictment. We are happy to hear of his Lordship's prayers, and are obliged to him for remembering us in them ; but should be more sanguine in our expectation of benefit, if we were not informed, the prayers of the *righteous* only avail much. "*Mis-*

erable men," he tells us, we "*are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*" With respect to the first, we must have plenty of that article, since he has distilled his own; and if the bonds of iniquity are not added, it is only because they are not within the reach of his mighty malice.

It is time to turn from this disgusting picture of sanctimonious hypocrisy and priestly insolence, to address a word to the reader on the following pamphlet. The political sentiments of Dr. Horsley are in truth of too little consequence in themselves, to engage a moment's curiosity, and deserve attention only as they indicate the spirit of the times. The freedom with which I have pointed out the abuses of government, will be little relished by the pusillanimous and the interested, but is, I am certain, of that nature, which it is the duty of the people of England never to relinquish, or suffer to be impaired by any human force or contrivance. In the present crisis of things, the danger to liberty is extreme, and it is requisite to address a warning voice to the nation, that may disturb its slumbers, if it cannot heal its lethargy. When we look at the distraction and misery of a neighbouring country, we behold a scene that is enough to make the most hardy republican tremble at the idea of a revolution. Nothing but an obstinate adherence to abuses, can ever push the people of England to that fatal extremity. But if the state of things continues to grow worse and worse, if the friends of reform, the true friends of their country, continue to be overwhelmed by calumny and persecution, the confusion will probably be dreadful, the misery extreme, and the calamities that awaits us too great for human calculation.

What must be the guilt of those men, who can calmly contemplate the approach of anarchy or despotism, and rather choose to behold the ruin of their coun-

try, than resign the smallest pittance of private emolument and advantage. To reconcile the disaffected, to remove discontents, to allay animosities, and open a prospect of increasing happiness and freedom, is yet in our power. But if a contrary course be taken, the sun of Great Britain is set for ever, her glory departed, and her history added to the catalogue of the mighty empires which exhibit the instability of all human grandeur, of empires which, after they rose by virtue to be the admiration of the world, sunk by corruption into obscurity and contempt. If any thing shall then remain of her boasted constitution; it will display magnificence in disorder, majestic desolation, Babylon in ruins, where, in the midst of broken arches and fallen columns, posterity will trace the *monuments* only of our ancient freedom!

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TO THE
NEW EDITION.

As the following pamphlet has been long out of print, the reader will naturally expect some reason should be assigned for its republication. I might satisfy myself with safely affirming that I have no alternative left but either to publish it myself, or to permit it to be done by others, since the copy-right has long since transpired; and I have been under the necessity of claiming as a favour what I could not insist upon as a right.

In addition to this, a most erroneous inference has been drawn from my suffering it to fall into neglect. It has been often insinuated, that my political principles have undergone a revolution, and that I have renounced the opinions which it was the object of this pamphlet to establish. I must beg leave, however, to assert, that fashionable as such changes have been, and sanctioned by many conspicuous examples, I am not ambitious of the honour attached to this species of conversion, from a conviction that he who has once been the advocate of freedom and of reform, will find it much easier to change his conduct than his principles—to worship the golden image, than to believe in the divinity of the idol. A reluctance to appear as a political writer, an opinion, whether well or ill founded, that the Christian ministry is in danger of losing something of its energy and sanctity by embarking on the stormy element of political debate, were the motives that determined me, and which, had I not already engaged, would probably have effectually deterred me from writing upon politics. These scruples have given way to feelings still stronger, to my extreme aversion to be classed with political apostates, and to the suspicion of being deterred from the honest avowal of my sentiments on subjects of great moment, by hopes and fears to which, through every period of my life, I have been a total stranger. The effect of increasing years has been to augment, if possible, my attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and to the cause of reform as inseparably combined with their preservation; and few things would give me more uneasiness, than to have it supposed I could ever become hostile or indifferent to these objects.

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The alterations in the present edition are nearly all of minor importance; they chiefly consist of slight literary corrections, which very rarely affect the sense. It was not my wish or intention to impair the *identity* of the performance. There is in several parts an acrimony and vehemence in the language, which the candid reader will put to the account of juvenile ardor; and which, should it be deemed excessive, he will perceive could not be corrected, without producing a new composition. One passage in the preface, delineating the character of the late Bishop Horsley, is omitted. On mature reflection, it appeared to the Writer, not quite consistent either with the spirit of Christianity, or with the reverence due to departed genius. For the severity with which he has treated the political character of Mr. Pitt, he is not disposed to apologise, because he feels the fullest conviction that the policy, foreign and domestic, of that celebrated statesman, has inflicted a more incurable wound on the Constitution, and entailed more permanent and irreparable calamities on the nation, than that of any other minister in the annals of British history. A simple reflection will be sufficient to evince the unparalleled magnitude of his apostacy, which is, that the memory of the *Son* of Lord Chatham, the vehement opposer of the American war, the champion of Reform, and the idol of the people, has become the rallying point of toryism, the type and symbol of whatever is most illiberal in principle, and intolerant in practice.

1821.

AN APOLOGY,

&c. &c.

SECTION I.

ON THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

SOLON, the celebrated legislator of Athens, we are told, enacted a law for the capital punishment of every citizen who should continue neuter when parties ran high in that republic. He considered, it should seem, the declining to take a decided part on great and critical occasions, an indication of such a culpable indifference to the interests of the commonwealth, as could be expiated only by death. While we blame the rigour of this law, we must confess the principle, on which it was founded, is just and solid. In a political contest, relating to particular men or measures, a well-wisher to his country may be permitted to remain silent; but when the great interests of a nation are at stake, it becomes every man to act with firmness and vigour. I consider the present as a season of this nature, and shall therefore make no apology for laying before the public, the reflections it has suggested.

The most capital advantage an enlightened people can enjoy is the liberty of discussing every subject which can fall within the compass of the human mind:

while this remains, freedom will flourish ; but should it be lost or impaired, its principles will neither be well understood nor long retained. To render the magistrate a judge of truth, and engage his authority in the suppression of opinions, shews an inattention to the nature and design of political society. When a nation forms a government, it is not wisdom but *power* which they place in the hand of the magistrate ; from whence it follows, his concern is only with those objects which *power* can operate upon. On this account, the administration of justice, the protection of property, and the defence of every member of the community from violence and outrage, fall naturally within the province of the civil ruler, for these may all be accomplished by *power* ; but an attempt to distinguish truth from error, and to countenance one set of opinions to the prejudice of another, is to apply power in a manner mischievous and absurd. To comprehend the reasons on which the right of public discussion is founded, it is requisite to remark the difference between *sentiment* and *conduct*. The *behaviour* of men in society will be influenced by motives drawn from the prospect of good and evil : here then is the proper department of government, as it is capable of applying that good and evil by which actions are determined. Truth, on the contrary, is quite of a different nature, being supported only by *evidence*, and, as when this is represented, we cannot withhold our assent, so where this is wanting, no power or authority can command it.

However some may affect to dread controversy, it can never be of ultimate disadvantage to the interests of truth, or the happiness of mankind. Where it is indulged in its full extent, a multitude of ridiculous opinions will no doubt be obtruded upon the public ; but any ill influence they may produce cannot continue long, as they are sure to be opposed with at least equal

ability, and that superior advantage which is ever attendant on truth. The colours with which wit or eloquence may have adorned a false system will gradually die away, sophistry be detected, and every thing estimated at length according to its true value. Publications besides, like every thing else that is human, are of a mixed nature, where truth is often blended with falsehood, and important hints suggested in the midst of much impertinent or pernicious matter ; nor is there any way of separating the precious from the vile, but by tolerating the whole. Where the right of unlimited inquiry is exerted, the human faculties will be upon the advance ; where it is relinquished, they will be of necessity at a stand, and will probably decline.

If we have recourse to experience, that kind of enlarged experience in particular which history furnishes, we shall not be apt to entertain any violent alarm at the greatest liberty of discussion : we shall there see that to this we are indebted for those improvements in arts and sciences, which have meliorated in so great a degree the condition of mankind. The middle ages, as they are called, the darkest period of which we have any particular accounts, were remarkable for two things ; the extreme ignorance that prevailed, and an excessive veneration for received opinions ; circumstances, which having been always united, operate on each other, it is plain, as cause and effect. The whole compass of science was in those times subject to restraint ; every new opinion was looked upon as dangerous. To affirm the globe we inhabit to be round, was deemed heresy, and for asserting its motion, the immortal Galileo was confined in the prisons of the Inquisition. Yet, it is remarkable, so little are the human faculties fitted for restraint, that its utmost rigour was never able to effect a thorough unanimity, or to preclude the most alarming discussions and controversies. For no sooner was one

point settled than another was started ; and as the articles on which men professed to differ were always extremely few and subtle, they came the more easily into contact, and their animosities were the more violent and concentrated. The shape of the tonsure, or manner in which a monk should shave his head, would then throw a whole kingdom into convulsions. In proportion as the world has become more enlightened, this unnatural policy of restraint has retired, the sciences it has entirely abandoned, and has taken its last stand on religion and politics. The first of these was long considered of a nature so peculiarly sacred, that every attempt to alter it, or to impair the reverence for its received institutions, was regarded under the name of heresy as a crime of the first magnitude. Yet, dangerous as free inquiry may have been looked upon when extended to the principles of religion, there is no department where it was more necessary, or its interference more decidedly beneficial. By nobly daring to exert it when all the powers on earth were combined in its suppression, did Luther accomplish that reformation which drew forth primitive Christianity, long hidden and concealed under a load of abuses, to the view of an awakened and astonished world. So great is the force of truth when it has once gained the attention, that all the arts and policy of the court of Rome, aided throughout every part of Europe, by a veneration for antiquity, the prejudices of the vulgar, and the cruelty of despots, were fairly baffled and confounded by the opposition of a solitary monk. And had this principle of free inquiry been permitted in succeeding times to have full scope, Christianity would at this period have been much better understood, and the animosity of sects considerably abated. Religious toleration has never been complete even in England ; but having prevailed more here than perhaps in any other country,

there is no place where the doctrines of religion have been set in so clear a light, or its truths so ably defended. The writings of Deists have contributed much to this end. Whoever will compare the late defences of Christianity by Locke, Butler, or Clark, with those of the ancient apologists, will discern in the former far more precision and an abler method of reasoning than in the latter, which must be attributed chiefly to the superior spirit of inquiry by which modern times are distinguished. Whatever alarm then may have been taken at the liberty of discussion, religion, it is plain, hath been a gainer by it ; its abuses corrected, and its divine authority settled on a firmer basis than ever.

Though I have taken the liberty of making these preliminary remarks on the influence of free inquiry in general, what I have more immediately in view is, to defend its exercise in relation to government. This being an institution purely human, one would imagine it were the proper province for freedom of discussion in its utmost extent. It is surely just, that every one should have a right to examine those measures by which the happiness of all may be affected. The control of the public mind over the conduct of ministers exerted through the medium of the press, has been regarded by the best writers both in our country and on the continent, as the main support of our liberties. While this remains, we cannot be enslaved ; when it is impaired or diminished, we shall soon cease to be free.

Under pretence of its being seditious to express any disapprobation of the *form* of our government, the most alarming attempts are made to wrest the liberty of the press out of our hands. It is far from being my intention to set up a defence of republican principles, as I am persuaded whatever imperfections may attend the British constitution, it is competent to all the ends of government, and the best adapted of any to the *actual*

situation of this kingdom. Yet I am convinced there is no crime in being a republican, and that while he obeys the laws, every man has a right to entertain what sentiments he pleases on our form of government, and to discuss this with the same freedom as any other topic. In proof of this, I shall beg the reader's attention to the following arguments.

1. We may apply to this point in particular, the observation that has been made on the influence of free inquiry in general, that it will issue in the firmer establishment of truth, and the overthrow of error. Every thing that is really excellent will bear examination, it will even invite it, and the more narrowly it is surveyed, to the more advantage it will appear. Is our constitution a good one ; it will gain in our esteem by the severest inquiry. Is it bad ; then its imperfections should be laid open and exposed. Is it, as is generally confessed, of a mixed nature, excellent in theory, but defective in its practice ; freedom of discussion will be still requisite to point out the nature and source of its corruptions, and apply suitable remedies. If our constitution be that perfect model of excellence it is represented, it may boldly appeal to the *reason* of an enlightened age, and need not rest on the support of an implicit faith.

2. Government is the creature of the people, and that which they have created they surely have a right to examine. The great Author of Nature having placed the right of dominion in no particular hands, hath left every point relating to it to be settled by the consent and approbation of mankind. In spite of the attempts of sophistry to conceal the origin of political right, it must inevitably rest at length on the acquiescence of the people. In the case of individuals it is extremely plain. If one man should overwhelm another with superior force, and after completely subduing him

under the name of government, transmit him in this condition to his heirs, every one would exclaim against such an act of injustice. But whether the object of his oppression be one, or a million, can make no difference in its nature, the idea of equity having no relation to that of numbers. Mr. Burke, with some other authors, are aware that an original right of dominion can only be explained by resolving it into the will of the people, yet contend that it becomes inalienable and independent by length of time and prescription. This fatal mistake appears to me to have arisen from confounding the right of dominion with that of private property. Possession for a certain time, it is true, vests in the latter a complete right, or there would be no end to vexation of claims; not to mention that it is of no consequence to society where property lies, provided its regulations be clear, and its possession undisturbed. For the same reason, it is of the essence of private property, to be held for the sole use of the owner, with liberty to employ it in what way he pleases, consistent with the safety of the community. But the right of dominion has none of the qualities that distinguish private possession. It is never indifferent to the community in whose hands it is lodged; nor is it intended in any degree for the benefit of those who conduct it. Being derived from the will of the people, explicit or implied, and existing solely for their use, it can no more become independent of that will, than water can arise above its source. But if we allow the people are the true origin of political power, it is absurd to require them to resign the right of discussing any question that can arise either upon its form or its measures, as this would put it forever out of their power to revoke the trust which they have placed in the hands of their rulers.

3. If it be a crime for a subject of Great Britain to express his disapprobation of that form of government

under which he lives, the same conduct must be condemned in the inhabitant of any other country. Perhaps it will be said, a distinction ought to be made on account of the superior excellence of the British Constitution. This superiority I am not disposed to contest ; yet cannot allow it to be a proper reply, as it takes for granted that which is supposed to be a matter of debate and inquiry. Let a government be ever so despotic, it is a chance if those who share in the administration, are not loud in proclaiming its excellence. Go into Turkey, and the Pachas of the provinces will probably tell you, that the Turkish government is the most perfect in the world. If the excellency of a constitution then is assigned as the reason that none should be permitted to censure it, who, I ask, is to determine on this its excellence ? If you reply, every man's own reason will determine ; you concede the very point I am endeavouring to establish, the liberty of free inquiry : if you reply, our rulers, you admit a principle that equally applies to every government in the world, and will lend no more support to the British constitution than to that of Turkey or Algiers.

4. An inquiry respecting the comparative excellence of civil constitutions can be forbidden on no other pretence, than that of its tending to sedition and anarchy. This plea, however, will have little weight with those who reflect, to how many ill purposes it has been already applied ; and that when the example has been once introduced of suppressing opinions on account of their imagined ill tendency, it has seldom been confined within any safe or reasonable bounds. The doctrine of tendencies is extremely subtle and complicated. Whatever would diminish our veneration for the Christian religion, or shake our belief in the being of a God, will be allowed to be of a very evil tendency ; yet few, I imagine, who are acquainted with history, would wish

to see the writings of skeptics or deists suppressed by law ; being persuaded it would be lodging a very dangerous power in the hands of the magistrate, and that truth is best supported by its own evidence. This • dread of certain opinions, on account of their tendency, has been the copious spring of all those religious wars and persecutions, which are the disgrace and calamity of modern times.

Whatever danger may result from the freedom of political debate in some countries, no apprehension from that quarter need be entertained in our own. Free inquiry will never endanger the existence of a good government ; scarcely will it be able to work the overthrow of a bad one. So uncertain is the issue of all revolutions, so turbulent and bloody the scenes that too often usher them in, the prejudice on the side of an ancient establishment so great, and the interests involved in its support so powerful, that while it provides in any tolerable measure for the happiness of the people, it may defy all the efforts of its enemies.

The real danger to every free government is less from its enemies than from itself. Should it resist the most temperate reforms, and maintain its abuses with obstinacy, imputing complaint to faction, calumniating its friends, and smiling only on its flatterers ; should it encourage informers, and hold out rewards to treachery, turning every man into a spy, and every neighbourhood into the seat of an inquisition, let it not hope it can long conceal its tyranny under the mask of freedom. These are the avenues through which despotism must enter ; these are the arts at which integrity sickens and freedom turns pale.

SECTION II.

ON ASSOCIATIONS.

THE associations that have been formed in various parts of the kingdom, appear to me to have trodden very nearly in the steps I have been describing. Nothing could have justified this extraordinary mode of combination but the actual existence of those insurrections and plots, of which no traces have appeared, except in a speech from the throne. They merit a patent for insurrections, who have discovered the art of conducting them with so much silence and secrecy, that in the very places where they are affirmed to have happened, they have been heard of only by rebound from the cabinet. Happy had it been for the repose of unoffending multitudes, if the Associators had been able to put their mobs in possession of this important discovery before they set them in motion.

No sooner had the ministry spread an alarm through the kingdom against republicans and levellers, than an assembly of court-sycophants with a placeman at their head, entered into what they termed an association at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, whence they issued accounts of their proceedings. This was the primitive, the metropolitan association, which, with few exceptions, gave the tone to the succeeding, who did little more than copy its language and its spirit. As the popular ferment has, it may be hoped, by this time in some meas-

ure subsided, it may not be improper to endeavour to estimate the utility, and develop the principles of these societies.

1. The first particular that engages the attention, is their *singular* and *unprecedented* nature. The object is altogether new. The political societies that have been hitherto formed, never thought of interfering with the operations of law, but were content with giving by their union, greater force and publicity to their sentiments. The diffusion of principles was their object, not the suppression ; and, confiding in the justness of their cause, they challenged their enemies into the field of controversy. These societies, on the other hand, are combined with an express view to extinguish opinions, and to overwhelm freedom of inquiry by the terrors of criminal prosecution. They pretend not to enlighten the people by the spread of political knowledge, or to confute the errors of the system they wish to discountenance : they breathe only the language of menace : their element is indictment and prosecution, and their criminal justice formed on the model of Rhadamanthus, the poetic judge of hell.

Castigatque, auditque, dolos subigitque fateri.

2. They are not only new in their nature and complexion, but are unsupported by any just pretence of expedience or necessity. The British constitution hath provided ample securities for its stability and permanence. The prerogatives of the crown in all matters touching its dignity, are of a nature so high and weighty as may rather occasion alarm than need corroboration. The office of Attorney General is created for the very purpose of prosecuting sedition, and he has the peculiar privilege of filing a bill against offenders, in the king's name, without the intervention of a grand jury. If the public tranquillity be threatened,

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the king can embody the militia as well as station the military in the suspected places ; and when to this is added the immense patronage and influence which flows from the disposal of seventeen millions a year, it must be evident the stability of the British government can never be shaken by the efforts of any minority whatever. It comprehends within itself all the resources of defence, which the best civil polity ought to possess. The permanence of every government must depend, however, after all, upon opinion, a general persuasion of its excellence, which can never be increased by its assuming a vindictive and sanguinary aspect. While it is the object of the people's approbation, it will be continued, and to support it much beyond that period, by mere force and terror, would be impossible were it just, and unjust were it possible. The law hath amply provided against *overt acts* of sedition and disorder, and to suppress *mere opinions* by any other method than reason and argument, is the height of tyranny. Freedom of thought being intimately connected with the happiness and dignity of man in every stage of his being, is of so much more importance than the preservation of any constitution, that to infringe the former under pretence of supporting the latter, is to sacrifice the means to the end.

3. In attempting to define the boundary which separates the liberty of the press from its licentiousness, these societies have undertaken a task which they are utterly unable to execute. The line that divides them is too nice and delicate to be perceived by every eye, or to be drawn by every rude and unskilful hand. When a public outrage against the laws is committed, the crime is felt in a moment ; but to ascertain the qualities which compose a libel, and to apply with exactness the general idea to every instance and example which may occur, demands an effort of thought

and reflection, little likely to be exerted by the great mass of mankind. Bewildered in a pursuit which they are incapable of conducting with propriety, taught to suspect treason and sedition in every page they read, and in every conversation they hear, the necessary effect of such an employment must be to perplex the understanding, and degrade the heart. An admirable expedient for transforming a great and generous people into a contemptible race of spies and informers!

For private individuals to combine together at all with a view to quicken the vigour of criminal prosecution, is suspicious at least, if not illegal; in a case where the liberty of the press is concerned, all such combinations are utterly improper. The faults and the excellencies of a book are often so blended, the motives of a writer so difficult to ascertain, and the mischiefs of servile restraint so alarming, that the criminality of a book should always be left to be determined by the particular circumstances of the case. As one would rather see many criminals escape, than the punishment of one innocent person, so it is infinitely better a multitude of errors should be propagated, than one truth be suppressed.

If the suppression of Mr. Paine's pamphlet be the object of these societies, they are ridiculous in the extreme; for the circulation of his works ceased the moment they were declared a libel: if any other publication be intended, they are premature and impertinent, in presuming to anticipate the decision of the courts.

4. Admitting, however, the principle on which they are founded to be ever so just and proper, they are highly impolitic. All violence exerted towards opinions which falls short of *extermination*, serves no other purpose than to render them more known, and ulti-

mately to increase the zeal and number of their abettors. Opinions that are false may be dissipated by the force of argument ; when they are true, their punishment draws towards them infallibly more of the public attention, and enables them to dwell with more lasting weight and pressure on the mind. The progress of reason is aided in this case by the passions, and finds in curiosity, compassion, and resentment, powerful auxiliaries.

When public discontents are allowed to vent themselves in reasoning and discourse, they subside into a calm ; but their confinement in the bosom is apt to give them a fierce and deadly tincture. The reason of this is obvious : as men are seldom disposed to complain till they at least imagine themselves injured, so there is no injury which they will remember so long or resent so deeply, as that of being threatened into silence. This seems like adding triumph to oppression, and insult to injury. The apparent tranquillity which may ensue, is delusive and ominous ; it is that awful stillness which nature feels, while she is awaiting the discharge of the gathered tempest.

The professed object of these associations is to strengthen the hands of government : but there is one way in which it may strengthen its own hands most effectually ; recommended by a very venerable authority, though one from which it hath taken but few lessons. "He that hath *clean hands*," saith a sage adviser, "shall grow stronger and stronger." If the government wishes to become more vigorous, let it first become more pure, lest an addition to its strength should only increase its capacity for mischief.

There is a characteristic feature attending these associations, which is sufficient to acquaint us with their real origin and spirit, that is the silence, almost total, which they maintain respecting political abuses. Had

they been intended, as their title imports, merely to furnish an antidote to the spread of republican schemes and doctrines, they would have loudly asserted the necessity of reform, as a conciliatory principle, a centre of union, in which the virtuous of all descriptions might have concurred. But this, however conducive to the good of the people, would have defeated their whole project, which consisted in availing themselves of an alarm which they had artfully prepared, in order to withdraw the public attention from real grievances to imaginary dangers. The Hercules of reform had penetrated the Augean stable of abuses; the fabric of corruption, hitherto deemed sacred, began to totter, and its upholders were apprehensive their iniquity was almost full. In this perplexity, they embraced an occasion afforded them by the spread of certain bold speculations—(speculations which owed their success to the corruptions of government) to diffuse a panic, and to drown the justest complaints in unmeaning clamour. The plan of associating, thus commencing in corruption, and propagated by imitation and by fear, had for its *pretext* the fear of republicanism; for its *object* the perpetuity of abuses. Associations in this light may be considered as mirrors placed to advantage for reflecting the finesses and tricks of the ministry. At present they are playing into each other's hands, and no doubt find great entertainment in deceiving the nation. But let them be aware lest it should be found, after all, none are so much duped as themselves. Wisdom and truth, the offspring of the sky, are immortal; but cunning and deception, the meteors of the earth, after glittering for a moment, must pass away.

The candour and sincerity of these associators is of a piece with their other virtues: for while they profess to be combined in order to prevent riots and in-

surrections, attempted to be raised by republicans and levellers, they can neither point out the persons to whom that description applies, nor mention a single riot that was not fomented by their principles and engaged on their side. There have been three riots in England of late on a political account, one at Birmingham, one at Manchester, and one at Cambridge; each of which have been levelled against dissenters and friends of reform.*

The Crown and Anchor association, as it was first in order of time, seems also determined, by pushing to a greater length the maxims of arbitrary power, to maintain its pre-eminence in every other respect. The divine right of monarchy, the sacred anointing of kings, passive obedience and non-resistance, are the hemlock and night-shade which these physicians have prescribed for the health of the nation; and are yet but a specimen of a more fertile crop which they have promised out of the hot-bed of their depravity. The opinions which they have associated to suppress, are contained, they tell us, in the terms liberty and equality; after which they proceed to a dull harangue on the mischiefs that must flow from equalizing property. All mankind, they gravely tell us, are not equal in virtue, as if that were not sufficiently evident from the existence of their society. The notion of equality in

* The conduct of an honourable member of the House of Commons, respecting the last of these, was extremely illiberal. He informed the House, that the riot at Cambridge was nothing more than that the mob compelled Mr. Musgrave, one of his constituents, who had been heard to speak seditious words, to sing, *God save the King*—a statement in which he was utterly mistaken. Mr. Musgrave, with whom I have the pleasure of being well acquainted, was neither guilty of uttering seditious discourse, nor did he, I am certain, comply with the requisition. His whole crime consists in the love of his country, and a zeal for parliamentary reform. It would be happy for this nation, if a portion only of the integrity and disinterested virtue which adorn his character, could be infused into our great men.

property, was never seriously cherished in the mind of any man, unless for the purpose of calumny : and the term transplanted from a neighbouring country, never intended *there* any thing more than *equality of rights*—as opposed to feudal oppression and hereditary distinctions. An equality of rights may consist with the greatest inequality between the thing to which those rights extend. It belongs to the very nature of *property*, for the owner to have a full and complete right to that which he possesses, and consequently for all properties to have *equal* rights ; but who is so ridiculous as to infer from thence, that the *possessions* themselves are equal. A more alarming idea cannot be spread among the people, than that there is a large party ready to abet them in any enterprise of depredation and plunder. As all men do not know that the element of the associators is calumny, they are really in danger for a while of being believed, and must thank themselves if they should realize the plan of equality their own malice has invented.

I am happy to find that Mr. Law, a very respectable gentleman, who had joined the Crown and Anchor society, has publicly withdrawn his name, disgusted with their conduct ; by whom we are informed they receive anonymous letters, vilifying the characters of persons of the first eminence, and that they are in avowed alliance with the ministry for prosecutions, whom they entreat to order the *Solicitor General to proceed on their suggestions*. When such a society declares "*itself to be unconnected with any political party*," our respect for human nature impels us to believe it, and to hope their appearance may be considered as an era in the annals of corruption, which will transmit their names to posterity with the encomiums they deserve. With sycophants so base and venal, no argument or remonstrance can be expected to have

any success. It is in vain to apply to reason when it is perverted and abused, to shame when it is extinguished, to a conscience which has ceased to admonish: I shall therefore leave them in the undisturbed possession of that true philosophical indifference, which steels them against the reproaches of their own hearts, and the contempt of all honest men.

All the associations, it is true, do not breathe the spirit which disgraces that of the Crown and Anchor. But they all concur in establishing a political test, on the first appearance of which the friends of liberty should make a stand. The opinions proposed may be innocent, but the precedent is fatal; and the moment subscription becomes the price of security, the rubicon is passed. Emboldened by the success of this expedient, its authors will venture on more vigorous measures: test will steal upon test, and the bounds of tolerated opinion will be continually narrowed, till we awake under the fangs of a relentless despotism.

SECTION III.

ON A REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.

Whatever difference of opinion may take place in points of less importance, there is one in which the friends of freedom are entirely agreed, that is, the necessity of reform in the representation. The theory of the English constitution presents three independent powers; the King as executive head, with a negative in the legislature, an hereditary House of Peers, and an assembly of Commons, who are appointed to represent the nation at large. From this enumeration it is plain, the people of England can have no liberty, that is, no share in forming the laws, but what they exert through the medium of the last of those bodies; nor then, but in proportion to its independence of the other. The independence, therefore, of the House of Commons, is the column on which the whole fabric of our liberty rests. Representation may be considered as complete when it collects to a sufficient extent, and transmits with perfect fidelity, the real sentiments of the people; but this it may fail of accomplishing through various causes. If its electors are but a handful of people, and of a peculiar order and description; if its duration is sufficient to enable it to imbibe the spirit of a corporation; if its integrity be corrupted by treasury influence, or warped by the pros-

pect of places and pensions ; it may, by these means, not only fail of the end of its appointment, but fall into such an entire dependence on the executive branch, as to become a most dangerous instrument of arbitrary power. The usurpation of the emperors at Rome would not have been safe, unless it had concealed itself behind the formalities of a senate.

The confused and inadequate state of our representation, at present, is too obvious to escape the attention of the most careless observer. While through the fluctuation of human affairs, many towns of ancient note have fallen into decay, and the increase of commerce has raised obscure hamlets to splendour and distinction, the state of representation standing still amidst these vast changes, points back to an order of things which no longer subsists. The opulent towns of Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, send no members to parliament; the decayed boroughs of Cornwall appoint a multitude of representatives. Old Sarum sends two members, though there are not more than one or two families residing in it. The disproportion between those who vote for representatives and the people at large is so great, that the majority of our House of Commons is chosen by less than eight thousand, in a kingdom consisting of as many millions. Mr. Burgh, in his excellent political disquisitions, has made a very laborious calculation on this head; from which it appears, that the affairs of this great empire are decided by the suffrages of between five and six thousand electors; so that our representation, instead of being co-extended with the people, fails of this in a proportion that is truly enormous. The qualifications, moreover, that confer the right of election, are capricious and irregular. In some places it belongs to the corporation, or to those whom they think proper to make free; in some to every house-keeper; in others,

it is attached to a particular estate, whose proprietor is absolute lord of the borough, of which he makes his advantage, by representing it himself, or disposing of it to the best bidder. In counties, the right of election is annexed only to one kind of property, that of freehold; the proprietor of copyhold land being entirely deprived of it, though his political situation is precisely the same.

The consequence of this perplexity in the qualifications of electors is often a tedious scrutiny and examination before a committee of the House of Commons, prolonged to such a length, that there is no time when there are not some boroughs entirely unrepresented. These gross defects in our representation have struck all sensible men very forcibly; even Mr. Paley, a courtly writer in the main, declares, the bulk of the inhabitants of this country have little more concern in the appointment of parliament, than the subjects of the Grand Seigneur at Constantinople.

On the propriety of the several plans which have been proposed to remedy these evils, it is not for me to decide; I shall choose rather to point out two general principles which ought, in my opinion, to pervade every plan of parliamentary reform; the first of which respects the mode of election, the second the independence of the elected. In order to give the people a true representation, let its basis be enlarged, and the duration of parliaments shortened. The first of these improvements would diminish bribery and corruption, lessen the violence and tumult of elections, and secure to the people a real, and unequivocal organ for the expression of their sentiments.

Were every householder in town and country permitted to vote, the number of electors would be so great, that as no art or industry would be able to bias their minds, so no sums of money would be sufficient

to win their suffrages. The plan which the Duke of Richmond recommended was, if I mistake not, still more comprehensive, including all that were of age, except menial servants. By this means, the different passions and prejudices of men would check each other, the predominance of any particular or local interest be kept down, and from the whole there would result that *general impression*, which would convey with precision the unbiassed sense of the people.

But besides this, another great improvement, in my opinion, would be, to shorten the duration of parliament, by bringing it back to one year. The *Michel Gremote*, or great council of the kingdom, was appointed to meet under Alfred twice a year, and by divers ancient statutes after the conquest, the king was bound to summon a parliament every year or oftener, if need be; when to remedy the looseness of this latter phrase, by the 16th of Charles the Second it was enacted, the holding of parliaments should not be intermitted above three years at most; and in the first of King William, it is declared as one of the rights of the people, that for redress of all grievances and preserving the laws, parliaments ought to be held frequently; which was again reduced to a certainty by another statute, which enacts, that a new parliament shall be called within three years after the termination of the former. To this term did they continue limited till the reign of George the First; when, after the rebellion of fifteen, the septennial act was passed, under the pretence of diminishing the expense of elections and preserving the kingdom against the designs of the Pretender. A noble lord observed, on that occasion, he was at an utter loss to describe the nature of this prolonged parliament, unless he were allowed to borrow a phrase from the Athanasian Creed; for it was, "neither created, nor begotten, but proceeding." Without disputing the

upright intentions of the authors of this act, it is plain, they might on the same principle have voted themselves perpetual; and their conduct will ever remain a monument of that short-sightedness in politics, which in providing for the pressure of the moment puts to hazard the liberty and happiness of future times. It is intolerable, that in so large a space of a man's life as seven years, he should never be able to correct the error he may have committed in the choice of a representative, but be compelled to see him every year dipping deeper into corruption; a helpless spectator of the contempt of his interests, and the ruin of his country. During the present period of parliaments, a nation may sustain the greatest possible changes; may descend by a succession of ill counsels, from the highest pinnacle of its fortunes, to the lowest point of depression; its treasure exhausted, its credit sunk, and its weight almost completely annihilated in the scale of empire. Ruin and felicity are seldom dispensed by the same hand, nor is it likely any succour in calamity should flow from the wisdom and virtue of those, by whose folly and wickedness it was inflicted.

The union between a representative and his constituents, ought to be strict and entire; but the septennial act has rendered it little more than nominal. The duration of parliament sets its members at a distance from the people, begets a notion of independence, and gives the minister so much leisure to insinuate himself into their graces, that before the period is expired, they become very mild and complying. Sir Robert Walpole used to say, that "every man had his price;" a maxim on which he relied with so much security, that he declared he seldom troubled himself with the election of members, but rather chose to stay and buy them up when they came to market. A very interesting work, lately published, entitled, "*Anecdotes of Lord*

Chatham," unfolds some parts of this mystery of iniquity, which the reader will probably think equally new and surprising. There is a regular office, it seems, that of manager of the House of Commons, which generally devolves on one of the secretaries of state, and consists in securing, at all events, a majority in parliament by a judicious application of promises and bribes. The sums disbursed by this honourable office are involved under the head of Secret Service Money; and so delicate is this employment of manager of the House of Commons considered, that we have an account in the above-mentioned treatise, of a new arrangement of ministry, which failed for no other reason, than that the different parties could not agree on the proper person to fill it.*

This secret influence which prevails, must be allowed to be extremely disgraceful; nor can it ever be effectually remedied, but by contracting the duration of parliaments.

If it be objected to annual parliaments, that by this means the tumult and riot attendant on elections will be oftener repeated; it ought to be remembered, that their duration is the chief source of these disorders. Render a seat in the House of Commons of less value, and you diminish at once the violence of the struggle. In America, the election of representatives takes place

* As I have taken my information on this head entirely on the authority of the work called, "Anecdotes of Lord Chatham," the reader may not be displeased with the following extract, vol. ii. p. 121. "The management of the House of Commons, as it is called, is a confidential department unknown to the constitution. In the public accounts it is immersed under the head of secret service money. It is usually given to the secretary of state when that post is filled by a commoner. The business of the department, is to distribute with *art* and *policy*, amongst the members who have no ostensible places, sums of money, for their support during the session; besides contracts, lottery tickets, and other douceurs. It is no uncommon circumstance, at the end of a session, for a gentleman to receive five hundred or a thousand pounds for *his services*."

throughout that vast continent, in one day, with the greatest tranquillity.*

In a mixed constitution like ours, it is impossible to estimate the importance of an independent parliament; for as it is here our freedom consists, if this barrier to the encroachments of arbitrary power once fails, we can oppose no other. Should the King attempt to govern without a parliament, or should the upper house pretend to legislate independently of the lower, we should immediately take the alarm; but if the House of Commons falls insensibly under the control of the other two branches of the legislature, our danger is greater, because our apprehensions are less. The forms of a free constitution surviving when its spirit is extinct, would perpetuate slavery by rendering it more concealed and secure. On this account, I apprehend, did Montesquieu predict the loss of our freedom, from the legislative power becoming more corrupt than the executive; a crisis to which, if it has not arrived already, it is hastening apace. The immortal Locke, far from looking with the indifference too common on the abuses in our representation, considered all improper influence exerted in that quarter as threatening the very dissolution of government. "*Thus, says he, to regulate candidates and electors, and new-model the ways of election, what is it but to cut up the government by the roots, and poison the very fountain of public security.*"

No enormity can subsist long without meeting with advocates; on which account we need not wonder, that the corruption of parliament has been justified under the mild denomination of influence, though it must pain every virtuous mind to see the enlightened Paley engaged in its defence. If a member votes consistently with his convictions, his conduct in that instance has

* This is an error. *Publisher.*

not been determined by influence ; but if he votes otherwise, give it what gentle name you please, he forfeits his integrity ; nor is it possible to mark the boundaries which should limit his compliance ; for if he may deviate a little, to attain the See of Winchester, he may certainly step a little farther, to reach the dignity of Primate. How familiar must the practice of corruption have become, when a philosophical moralist, a minister of religion, of great talents and virtue, in the calm retirement of his study, does not hesitate to become its public apologist.

The necessity of a reform in the constitution of parliament is in nothing more obvious than in the ascendancy of the aristocracy. This Colossus bestrides both houses of parliament ; legislates in one and exerts a domineering influence over the other. It is humiliating at the approach of an election, to see a whole county send a deputation to an Earl or Duke, and beg a representative as you would beg an alms. A multitude of laws have been framed, it is true, to prevent all interference of peers in elections ; but they neither are nor can be effectual, while the House of Commons opens its doors to their sons and brethren. If our liberty depends on the balance and control of the respective orders in the state, it must be extremely absurd to blend them together, by placing the father in one department of the legislature, and his family in the other.

Freedom is supposed by some to derive great security from the existence of a regular opposition ; an expedient which is, in my opinion, both the offspring and the cherisher of faction. That a minister should be opposed, when his measures are destructive to his country, can admit of no doubt ; that a systematic opposition should be maintained against any man, merely as a minister, without regard to the principles he may

profess, or the measures he may propose, which is intended by a regular opposition, appears to me a most corrupt and unprincipled maxim. When a legislative assembly is thus thrown into parties, distinguished by no leading principle, however warm and animated their debates, it is plain, they display only a struggle for the emoluments of office. This the people discern, and in consequence, listen with very little attention to the representations of the minister on one hand, or the minority on the other; being persuaded the only real difference between them is, that the one is anxious to gain, what the other is anxious to keep. If a measure be good, it is of no importance to the nation from whom it proceeds: yet will it be esteemed by the opposition a point of honour, not to let it pass without throwing every obstruction in its way. If we listen to the minister for the time being, the nation is always flourishing and happy; if we hearken to the opposition, it is a chance if it be not on the brink of destruction. In an assembly convened to deliberate on the affairs of a nation, how disgusting to hear the members perpetually talk of their connexions, and their resolution to act with a particular set of men, when if they have happened, by chance, to vote according to their convictions rather than their party, half their speeches are made up of apologies for a conduct so new and unexpected. When they see men united who agree in nothing but their hostility to the minister, the people fall at first into amazement and irresolution; till perceiving political debate is a mere scramble for profit and power, they endeavour to become as corrupt as their betters. It is not in that roar of faction which deafens the ear and sickens the heart, the still voice of Liberty is heard. She turns from the disgusting scene, and regards these struggles as the pangs and convulsions in which she is doomed to expire.

The æra of parties, flowing from the animation of freedom, is ever followed by an æra of faction, which marks its feebleness and decay. Parties are founded on *principle*, factions on *men*; under the first, the people are contending respecting the system that shall be pursued; under the second, they are candidates for servitude, and are only debating *whose livery* they shall wear. The purest times of the Roman republic were distinguished by violent dissensions; but they consisted in the jealousy of the several *orders* of the state among each other; on the ascendance of the patricians on the one side, and the plebeians on the other; a useful struggle, which maintained the balance and equipoise of the constitution. In the progress of corruption things took a turn: the permanent parties which sprang from the fixed principles of government were lost, and the citizens arranged themselves under the standard of particular leaders, being bandied into factions, under Marius or Sylla, Cæsar or Pompey; while the republic stood by without any interest in the dispute, a passive and helpless victim. The crisis of the fall of freedom in different nations, with respect to the causes that produce it, is extremely uniform. After the manner of the ancient factions, we hear much in England of the Bedford party, the Rockingham party, the Portland party, when it would puzzle the wisest man to point out their political distinction. The useful jealousy of the separate orders is extinct, being all melted down and blended into one mass of corruption. The House of Commons looks with no jealousy on the House of Lords, nor the House of Lords on the House of Commons; the struggle in both is maintained by the ambition of powerful individuals and families, between whom the kingdom is thrown as the prize, and the moment they unite, they perpetuate its subjection and divide its spoils.

From a late instance, we see they quarrel only about

the partition of the prey, but are unanimous in defending it. To the honour of Mr. Fox, and the band of illustrious patriots of which he is the leader, it will however be remembered, that they stood firm against a host of opponents, when, assailed by every species of calumny and invective, they had nothing to expect but the reproaches of the present, and the admiration of all future times. If any thing can rekindle the sparks of freedom, it will be the flame of their eloquence ; if any thing can reanimate her faded form, it will be the vigour of such minds.

The disordered state of our representation, it is acknowledged on all hands, must be remedied, some time or other ; but it is contended, that it would be improper, at present, on account of the political ferment that occupies the minds of men and the progress of republican principles ; a plausible objection, if delay can restore public tranquillity : but unless I am greatly mistaken, it will have just a contrary effect. It is hard to conceive, how the discontent that flows from the abuses of government can be allayed by their being perpetuated. If they are of such a nature that they can neither be palliated nor denied, and are made the ground of invective against the whole of our constitution, are not they its best friends who wish to cut off this occasion of scandal and complaint ? The *theory* of our constitution, we say, and justly, has been the admiration of the world ; the cavils of its enemies, then, derive their force entirely from the disagreement between that theory and its practice ; nothing therefore remains, but to bring them as near as human affairs will admit, to a perfect correspondence. This will cut up faction by the roots, and immediately distinguish those who wish to reform the constitution, from those who wish its subversion. Since the abuses are real, the longer they are continued the more they will be known ; the dis-

contented will be always gaining ground, and though repulsed, will return to the charge with redoubled vigour and advantage. Let reform be considered as a surgical operation, if you please, but since the constitution must undergo it or die, it is best to submit before the remedy becomes as dangerous as the disease. The example drawn from a neighbouring kingdom, as an argument for delay, ought to teach us a contrary lesson. Had the encroachments of arbitrary power been steadily resisted, and remedies been applied, as evils appeared, instead of piling them up as precedents, the disorders of government could never have arisen to that enormous height, nor would the people have been impelled to the dire necessity of building the whole fabric of political society afresh. It seems an infatuation in governments, that in tranquil times, they treat the people with contempt, and turn a deaf ear to their complaints; till public resentment kindling, they find when it is too late, that in their eagerness to retain every thing, they have lost all.

The pretence of Mr. Pitt and his friends for delaying this great business, are so utterly inconsistent, that it is too plain they are averse in reality to its ever taking place. When Mr. Pitt is reminded that he himself, at the beginning of his ministry, recommended parliamentary reform, he replies, it was necessary then, on account of the calamitous state of the nation, just emerged from an unsuccessful war, and filled with gloom and disquiet. But unless the people are libelled, they now are still more discontented; with this difference, that their uneasiness formerly arose from events but remotely connected with unequal representation; but that this is now the chief ground of complaint. It is absurd, however, to rest the propriety of reform on any turn of public affairs. If it be not requisite to secure our freedom, it is vain and useless;

but if it be a proper means of preserving that blessing, the nation will need it as much in peace as in war. When we wish to retain those habits, which we know it were best to relinquish, we are extremely ready to be soothed with momentary pretences for delay, though they appear, on reflection, to be drawn from quite opposite topics, and therefore to be equally applicable to all times and seasons.

A similar delusion is practised in the conduct of public affairs. If the people be tranquil and composed, and have not caught the passion of reform, it is impolitic, say the ministry, to disturb their minds, by agitating a question that lies at rest : if they are awakened, and touched with a conviction of the abuse, we must wait, say they, till the ferment subsides, and not lessen our dignity by seeming to yield to popular clamour : if we are at peace, and commerce flourishes, it is concluded we cannot need any improvement, in circumstances so prosperous and happy : if, on the other hand, we are at war, and our affairs unfortunate, an amendment in the representation is dreaded, as it would seem an acknowledgment, that our calamities flowed from the ill conduct of parliament. Now, as the nation must always be in one or other of these situations, the conclusion is, the period of reform can never arrive at all.

This pretence for delay will appear the more extraordinary in the British ministry, from a comparison of the exploits they have performed, with the task they decline. They have found time for involving us in millions of debt ; for cementing a system of corruption, that reaches from the cabinet to the cottage ; for carrying havoc and devastation to the remotest extremities of the globe ; for accumulating taxes which famish the peasant and reward the parasite ; for bandying the whole kingdom into factions, to the ruin of all virtue

and public spirit ; for the completion of these achievements they have suffered no opportunity to escape them. Elementary treatises on time mention various arrangements and divisions, but none have ever touched on the chronology of statesmen. These are a generation, who measure their time not so much by the revolutions of the sun, as by the revolutions of power. There are two æras particularly marked in their calendar ; the one the period they are in the ministry, and the other when they are out ; which have a very different effect on their sentiments and reasoning. Their course commences in the character of friends to the people, whose grievances they display in all the colours of variegated diction ; but the moment they step over the threshold of St. James's, they behold every thing in a new light ; the taxes seem lessened, the people rise from their depression, the nation flourishes in peace and plenty, and every attempt at improvement is like heightening the beauties of paradise, or mending the air of elysium.

SECTION IV.

ON THEORIES AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

AMONG the many alarming symptoms of the present time, it is not the least, that there is a prevailing disposition to hold in contempt, the *Theory* of liberty as false and visionary. For my own part, it is my determination never to be deterred by an obnoxious name, from an open avowal of any principles that appear useful and important. Were the ridicule now cast on the Rights of Man confined to a mere phrase, as the title of a book, it were of little consequence; but when *that* is made the pretence for deriding the doctrine itself, it is matter of serious alarm.

To place the rights of man as the basis of lawful government, is not peculiar to Mr. Paine; but was done more than a century ago by men of no less eminence than Sidney and Locke. It is therefore extremely disingenuous to impute the system to Mr. Paine as its author. His structure may be false and erroneous, but the foundation was laid by other hands. That there are *natural rights*, or in other words, a certain liberty which men may exercise, independent of permission from society, can scarcely be doubted by those who comprehend the meaning of the terms. Every man must have a natural right to use his limbs in what manner he pleases, that is not injurious to another. In like manner, he must have a right to wor-

ship God after the mode he thinks acceptable : or in other words, he ought not to be compelled to consult any thing but his own conscience. These are a specimen of those rights which may properly be termed *natural* ; for, as philosophers speak of the primary qualities of matter, they cannot be increased or diminished. We cannot conceive the right of using our limbs to be created by society, or to be rendered more complete by any human agreement or compact.

But there still remains a question, whether this natural liberty must not be considered as entirely relinquished when we become members of society. It is pretended, that the moment we quit a state of *nature*, as we have given up the control of our actions in return for the superior advantages of law and government, we can never appeal again to any original principles, but must rest content with the advantages that are secured by the terms of the society. These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke, an author whose splendid and unequalled powers have given a vogue and fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason the encounter would not be difficult, but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence. The excursions of his genius are immense ! His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation, and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a masterpiece of pathetic composition ; so select are its images, so fraught with tenderness, and so rich with colours, " dipt in heaven," that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is in truth only too prolific : a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical

alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts, like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation.

His intellectual views in general, however, are wide and variegated, rather than distinct; and the light he has let in on the British constitution in particular, resembles the coloured effulgence of a painted medium, a kind of mimic twilight, solemn and soothing to the senses, but better fitted for ornament than use.

A book has lately been published, under the title of "Happiness and Rights," written by Mr. Hey, a respectable member of the University of Cambridge, whose professed object is, with Mr. Burke, to overturn the doctrine of natural rights. The few remarks I may make upon it are less on account of any merit in the work itself, than on account of its author, who being a member of considerable standing in the most liberal of our universities, may be presumed to speak the sentiments of that learned body. The chief difference between his theory and Mr. Burke's seems to be the denial of the existence of any rights that can be denominated natural, which Mr. Burke only supposed *resigned* on the formation of political society. "*The rights,*" says Mr. Hey, "*I can conjecture (for it is but a conjecture) to belong to me as a mere man, are so uncertain, and comparatively so unimportant, while the rights I feel myself possessed of in civil society are so great, so numerous, and many of them so well defined, that I am strongly inclined to consider society, as creating or giving my rights, rather than recognizing and securing what I could have claimed if I had lived in an unconnected state.*" [p. 137.]

As government implies restraint, it is plain a portion of our freedom is given up, by entering into it; the only question can then be, how far this resignation extends, whether to a part or to the whole. This point may, perhaps, be determined by the following reflections.

1. The advantages that civil power can procure to a community are *partial*. A small part, in comparison of the condition of man, can fall within its influence. Allowing it to be a rational institution, it must have that end in view, which a reasonable man would propose by appointing it; nor can it imply any greater sacrifice than is strictly necessary to its attainment. But on what account is it requisite to unite in political society? Plainly to guard against the injury of others; for were there no injustice among mankind, no protection would be needed; no *public force* necessary; every man might be left without restraint or control. The attainment of all possible good then is *not* the purpose of laws, but to secure us from external injury and violence; and as the means must be proportioned to the end, it is absurd to suppose, that by submitting to civil power, with a view to some *particular* benefits, we should be understood to hold all our advantages dependent upon that authority. Civil restraints imply nothing more than a surrender of our liberty in some points, in order to maintain it undisturbed in others of more importance. Thus we give up the liberty of repelling force by force, in return for a more equal administration of justice than private resentment would permit. But there are some rights which cannot with any propriety be yielded up to human authority, because they are perfectly consistent with every benefit its appointment can procure. The free use of our faculties in distinguishing truth from falsehood, the exertion of corporeal powers without injury to others, the choice of a religion and worship, are branches of natural freedom which no government can justly alter or diminish, because their restraint cannot conduce to that security which is its proper object. Government, like every other contrivance, has a *specific* end; it implies the resignation of just as much liberty as is needful to

attain it; whatever is demanded more is superfluous, a species of tyranny which ought to be corrected by withdrawing it. The relation of master and servant, of pupil and instructor, of the respective members of a family to their head, all include some restraint, some abridgment of natural liberty. But in these cases it is not pretended, that the surrender is total; and why should this be supposed to take place in political society, which is *one* of the relations of human life? This would be to render the foundation infinitely broader than the superstructure.

2. From the notion that political society precludes an appeal to natural rights, the greatest absurdities must ensue. If that idea be just, it is improper to say of any administration, that it is despotic or oppressive, unless it has receded from its first form and model. Civil power can never exceed its limits, until it deviates into a new track. For if every portion of natural freedom be given up by yielding to civil authority, we can never claim any other liberties than those precise ones which were ascertained in its first formation. The vassals of despotism may complain, perhaps, of the hardships which they suffer, but, unless it appear they are of *a new kind*, no injury is done them, for no right is violated. Rights are either natural or artificial; the first cannot be pleaded after they are relinquished, and the second cannot be impaired but by a departure from ancient precedents. If a man should be unfortunate enough to live under the dominion of a prince, who, like the monarchs of Persia, could murder his subjects at will, he may be unhappy, but cannot complain; for, on Mr. Hey's theory, he never had any rights but what were created by society; and on Mr. Burke's, he has forever relinquished them. The claims of *nature* being set aside, and the constitution of the government despotic from the beginning, his misery involves no in-

justice, and admits of no remedy. It requires little discernment to see that this theory rivets the chains of despotism, and shuts out from the political world the smallest glimpse of emancipation or improvement. Its language is, he that is a slave, let him be a slave still.

3. It is incumbent on Mr. Burke and his followers to ascertain the *time* when natural rights are relinquished. Mr. Hey is content with tracing their existence to society, while Mr. Burke, more moderate of the two, admitting their foundation in nature, only contends that regular government absorbs and swallows them up, bestowing artificial advantages in exchange. But at what period, it may be inquired, shall we date this wonderful revolution in the social condition of man? If we say it was as early as the first dawn of society, natural liberty had never any existence at all, since there are no traces even in tradition, of a period when men were utterly unconnected with each other. If we say this complete surrender took place with the first rudiments of law and government in every particular community, on what principle were subsequent improvements introduced? Mr. Burke is fond of resting our liberties on Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights; but he ought to remember, that as they do not carry us to the commencement of our government, which was established ages before, our forefathers had long ago resigned their natural liberty. If those famous stipulations only recognized such privileges as were in force before, they have no claim to be considered as the foundations of our constitution; but if they formed an *era* in the annals of freedom, they must have been erected on the basis of those natural rights which Mr. Burke ridicules and explodes. When our ancestors made those demands, it is evident they did not suppose an appeal to the rights of nature precluded. Every step a civilized nation can take towards a more equal administration,

is either an assertion of its natural liberty, or a criminal encroachment on just authority. The influence of government on the stock of natural rights, may be compared to that of a manufactory on the rude produce; it adds nothing to its quantity, but only qualifies and fits it for use. Political arrangement is more or less perfect in proportion as it enables us to exert our natural liberty to the greatest advantage; if it is diverted to any other purpose, it is made the instrument of gratifying the passions of a few, or imposing greater restraint than its object prescribes, it degenerates into tyranny and oppression.

The greatest objection to these principles is their perspicuity, which makes them ill relished by those whose interest it is to hide the nature of government from vulgar eyes, and induce a persuasion, that it is a secret which can only be unfolded to the *initiated* under the conduct of Mr. Burke, the great *Hierophant* and revealer of the mysteries. A mystery and a trick are generally two sides of the same object, according as it is turned to the view of the beholder.

The doctrine of Mr. Locke and his followers is founded on the natural equality of mankind; for as no man can have any natural or inherent right to rule any more than another, it necessarily follows, that a claim to dominion, wherever it is lodged, must be ultimately referred back to the explicit or implied consent of the people. Whatever source of civil authority is assigned different from this, will be found to resolve itself into *mere force*. But as the natural equality of one generation is the same with that of another, the people have always the same right to new-model their government, and set aside their rulers. This right, like every other, may be exerted capriciously and absurdly; but no human power can have any pretensions to intercept its exercise. For civil rulers cannot be

considered as having any claims, that are co-extended with those of the people, nor as forming a party separate from the nation. They are appointed by the community to *execute* its will, not to *oppose* it ; to manage the *public*, not to pursue any *private* or *particular* interests. Are all the existing authorities in a state, to lie, then, at the mercy of the populace, liable to be dissipated by the first breath of public discontent ? By no means : they are to be respected and obeyed, as interpreters of the public will. Till they are set aside by the unequivocal voice of the people, they are a law to every member of the community. To resist them, is rebellion ; and for any particular set of men to attempt their subversion by force is a heinous crime, as they represent and embody the collective majesty of the state. They are the exponents, to use the language of algebra, of the precise quantity of liberty the people have thought fit to legalize and secure. But though they are a law to every member of the society separately considered, they cannot bind the society itself, or prevent it, when it shall think proper, from forming an entire new arrangement ; a right that no compact can alienate or diminish, and which has been exerted as often as a free government has been formed. On this account, in resolving the right of dominion into compact. Mr. Locke appears to me somewhat inconsistent, or he has expressed himself with less clearness and accuracy than was usual with that great philosopher. There must have been a previous right to insist on stipulations, in those who formed them ; nor is there any reason why one race of men is not as competent to that purpose as another.

With the enemies of freedom, it is a usual artifice to represent the sovereignty of the people as a license to anarchy and disorder. But the tracing up civil power to that source will not diminish our obligation to obey ;

it only explains its reasons, and settles it on clear, determinate principles. It turns blind submission into rational obedience, tempers the passion for liberty with the love of order, and places mankind in a happy medium, between the extremes of anarchy on the one side, and oppression on the other. It is the polar star that will conduct us safe over the ocean of political debate and speculation, the law of laws, the legislator of legislators.

To reply to all the objections that have been advanced against this doctrine, would be a useless task, and exhaust the patience of the reader; but there is one drawn from the idea of a majority, much insisted on by Mr. Burke, and Mr. Hey, of which the latter gentleman is so enamoured, that he has spread it out into a multitude of pages. They assert, that the theory of natural rights, can never be realized, because every member of the community cannot concur in the choice of a government, and the minority being compelled to yield to the decisions of the majority, are under tyrannical restraint. To this reasoning it is a sufficient answer, that if a number of men act together at all, the necessity of being determined by the sense of the majority, in the last resort, is so obvious, that it is always implied. An exact concurrence of many particular wills, is impossible, and therefore when each taken separately has precisely the same influence, there can be no hardship in suffering the result to remain at issue till it is determined by the coincidence of the greater number. The idea of *natural liberty*, at least, is so little violated by this method of proceeding, that it is no more than what takes place every day in the smallest society, where the necessity of being determined by the voice of the majority is so plain, that it is scarcely ever reflected upon. The defenders of the rights of man mean not to contend for

impossibilities. We never hear of a right to fly, or to make two and two five. If the majority of a nation approve its government, it is in this respect as free as the smallest association or club; any thing beyond which must be visionary and romantic.

The next objection Mr. Hey insists upon is, if possible, still more frivolous, turning on the case of young persons during minority. He contends, that as some of these have more sense than may be found among common mechanics, and the lowest of the people, *natural right* demands their inclinations to be consulted in political arrangements. Were there any method of ascertaining exactly the degree of understanding possessed by young persons during their minority, so as to distinguish early intellects from the less mature, there would be some force in the objection; in the present case, the whole supposition is no more than one of those chimeras which this gentleman is ever fond of combating, with the same gravity, and to as little purpose, as Don Quixote his windmill.

The period of minority, it is true, varies in different countries, and is perhaps best determined every where by ancient custom and habit. An early maturity may confer on sixteen, more sagacity than is sometimes found at sixty; but what then? A wise government having for its object human nature at large, will be adapted, not to its accidental deviations, but to its usual aspects and appearances. For an answer to his argument against natural rights, drawn from the exclusion of women from political power, I beg leave to refer the author to the ingenious Miss Wolstenoreft, the eloquent patroness of female claims; unless, perhaps, every other empire may appear mean in the estimation of those who possess, with an uncontrolled authority, the empire of the heart.

"The situation," says Mr. Hey, (p. 137) "in which

any man finds himself placed, when he arrives at the power of reflecting, appears to be the consequence of a vast train of events, extending backwards hundreds or thousands of years, for aught he can tell, and totally baffling all the attempts at comprehension by human faculties."

From hence he concludes, all inquiry into the rights of man should be forborne. "What rights this Being (God) may have possibly intended that I might claim from beings like myself, if he had thought proper that I had lived amongst them in an *unconnected* state, that is to say, what are the rights of a mere *man*, appears a question involved in such obscurity, that I cannot trace even any indication of that Being having intended me to inquire into it."

If any thing be intended by these observations, it is, that we ought never to attempt to meliorate our condition, till we are perfectly acquainted with its causes. But as the subjects of the worst government are, probably, as ignorant of the train of events for some thousands of years back, as those who enjoy the best, they are to rest contented, it seems, until they can clear up that obscurity, and inquire no farther.

It would seem strange to presume an inference good, from not knowing how we arrived at it. Yet this seems as reasonable as to suppose the political circumstances of a people fit and proper, on account of our inability to trace the causes that produced them. To know the source of an evil, is only of consequence, as it may chance to conduct us to the remedy. But the whole paragraph I have quoted betrays the utmost perplexity of thought; confounding the *civil condition* of individuals, with the political institution of a society. The former will be infinitely various in the same community, arising from the different character, temper, and success of its members: the latter unites and per-

vades the whole, nor can any abuses attach to it, but what may be displayed and remedied.

It is perfectly disingenuous in this author, to represent his adversaries as desirous of committing the business of legislation indiscriminately to the meanest of mankind.* He well knows the wildest democratical writer contends for nothing more than popular government by *representation*. If the labouring part of the people are not competent to *choose* legislators, the English constitution is essentially wrong; especially in its present state, where the importance of each vote is enhanced by the paucity of the electors.

After the many examples of misrepresentation which this author has furnished, his declamations on the levelling system, cannot be matter of surprise. An equality of right is perfectly consistent with the utmost disproportion between the objects to which they extend. A peasant may have the same right to the exertion of his faculties with a Newton; but this will not fill up the vast chasm that separates them.

The ministry will feel great obligations to Mr. Hey, for putting off the evil day of reform to a far distant period,—a period so remote, that they may hope before it is completed, their names and their actions will be buried in friendly oblivion. He indulges a faint expectation, he tells us, that the practice of governments may be improved “*in two or three thousand years.*”

* “A man whose hands and ideas have been usefully confined for thirty or forty years to the labour and management of a farm, or the construction of a wall, or piece of cloth, does indeed, in one respect, appear superior to an infant three months old. The man could make a law of some sort or other; the infant could not. The man could in any particular circumstances of a nation say those words, We will go to war; or, We will not go to war: the infant could not. But the difference between them is more in appearance than in any useful reality. The man is totally unqualified to judge what ought to be enacted for laws.”—*Hey*, (p. 31.)

A smaller edition of this work has lately been published, considerably abridged, for the use of the poor, who, it may be feared, will be very little benefited by its perusal. Genius may dazzle, eloquence may persuade, reason may convince ; but to render popular, cold and comfortless sophistry, unaided by those powers, is an hopeless attempt.

I have trespassed, I am afraid, too far on the patience of my readers, in attempting to expose the fallacies by which the followers of Mr. Burke perplex the understanding, and endeavour to hide in obscurity the true sources of political power. Were there indeed any impropriety in laying them open, the blame would not fall on the friends of freedom, but on the provocation afforded by the extravagance and absurdity of its enemies. If princely power had never been raised to a level with the attributes of the Divinity by Filmer, it had probably never been sunk as low as popular acquiescence by Locke. The confused mixture of liberty and oppression, which ran through the feudal system, prevented the theory of government from being closely inspected ; particular rights were secured, but the relation of the people to their rulers was never explained on its just principles, till the transfer of superstition to civil power, shocked the common sense of mankind, and awakened their inquiries. They drew aside the veil, and where they were taught to expect a mystery, they discerned a fraud. There is, however, no room to apprehend any evil from political investigation, that will not be greatly overbalanced by its advantages : for besides that truth is always beneficial, tame submission to usurped power has hitherto been the malady of human nature. The dispersed situation of mankind, their indolence and inattention, and the opposition of their passions and interests, are circumstances which render it extremely difficult for them to

combine in resisting tyranny with success. In the field of government, as in that of the world, *the tares of despotism were sown while men slept!* The necessity of regular government, under some form or other, is so pressing, that the evil of anarchy is of short duration. Rapid, violent, destructive in its course, it is an inundation which, fed by no constant spring, soon dries up and disappears. The misfortune on these occasions is, that the people, for want of understanding the principles of liberty, seldom reach the true source of their misery; but after committing a thousand barbarities, only change their masters, when they should change their system.

SECTION V.

ON DISSENTERS.

Or that foul torrent of insult and abuse which it has lately been the lot of the friends of liberty to sustain, a larger portion hath fallen to the share of Dissenters than any other description of men. Their sentiments have been misrepresented, their loyalty suspected, and their most illustrious characters held up to derision and contempt. The ashes of the dead have been as little spared as the merit of the living ; and the same breath that has attempted to depreciate the talents and virtues of a Priestley, is employed to blacken the memory of a Price. The effusions of a distempered loyalty are mingled with execrations on that unfortunate sect ; as if the attachment to the King were to be measured by the hatred to Dissenters. Without any shadow of criminality, they are doomed to sustain perpetual insult and reproach ; their repose disturbed, and their lives threatened and endangered. If dissent be in truth a crime of such magnitude, that it must not be tolerated, let there be at least a punishment prescribed by law, that they may know what they have to expect, and not lie at the mercy of an enraged and deluded populace. It is natural to inquire into the cause of this extreme virulence against a particular class of the community, who are distinguished from others, only by embracing a different form and system of worship.

In the practice of the moral virtues, it will hardly be denied, that they are at least as exemplary as their neighbours ; while in the more immediate duties of religion, if there be any distinction, it lies in their carrying to a greater height, sentiments of seriousness and devotion. The nature of their *public conduct* will best appear from a rapid survey of some of those great political events in which it has had room to display itself ; where, though our history has been ransacked to supply invective, it will be seen, their merits more than compensate for any errors they may have committed. Their zeal in opposing Charles I. has been an eternal theme of reproach ; but it should be remembered, that when that resistance first took place, the parliament consisted for the most part of Churchmen, and was fully justified in its opposition, by the arbitrary measures of the court. Had the pretensions of Charles been patiently acquiesced in, our government had long ago been despotic.

What medium might have been found between tame submission and open hostility, and whether matters were not afterwards pushed to an extremity against the unfortunate monarch, it is not for me to determine, nor does it concern the vindication of Dissenters. For long before the final catastrophe which issued in the King's death, the favourable intentions of parliament were overruled by the ascendancy of Cromwell ; the parliament itself oppressed by his arms, and the influence both of churchmen and dissenters, bent under military usurpation. The execution of Charles was the deed of a faction, condemned by the great body of the puritans as a criminal severity. But whatever blame they may be supposed to have incurred on account of their conduct to Charles ; the merit of restoring monarchy in his son was all their own. The entire force of the empire was in their hands ; Monk

himself of their party; the parliament, the army all puritans; yet were they disinterested enough to call the heir to the throne, and yield the reins into his hands, with no other stipulation, than that of liberty of conscience, which he violated with a baseness and ingratitude peculiar to his character. All the return he made them for the recovery of his power, consisted in depriving two thousand of their ministers, and involving the whole body in a persecution, by which not less than ten thousand are supposed to have perished in imprisonment and want. But their patriotism was not to be shaken by these injuries. When towards the latter end of Charles the Second's reign the character of his successor inspired a dread of the establishment of popery, to avert that evil they cheerfully acquiesced in an exclusion from all places of emolument and trust; an extraordinary instance of magnanimity. When James the Second began to display arbitrary views, dissenters were among the first to take the alarm, regarding with jealousy, even an indulgence when it flowed from a dispensing power. The zeal with which they co-operated in bringing about the revolution, the ardour with which they have always espoused its principles, are too well known to need any proof, and can only be rendered more striking by a contrast with the conduct of the high church party. The latter maintained in its utmost extent the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance; were incessantly engaged in intrigues to overturn the revolution, and affirmed the doctrine of divine right to be an ancient and indisputable tenet of the English Church. Whoever wishes to ascertain the existence of those arts, by which they embroiled the reign of King William, may see them displayed at large in Burnet's History of his own Times.

The attachment of dissenters to the house of Hano-

ver, was signalized in a manner too remarkable to be soon forgotten. In the rebellions of fifteen and forty-five, they ventured on a breach of the law, by raising and officering regiments out of their own body; for which the parliament were reduced to the awkward expedient of passing an act of indemnity. This short sketch of their political conduct, as it is sufficient to establish their loyalty beyond suspicion, so may it well augment our surprise at the extreme obloquy and reproach with which they are treated. Mr. Hume, a competent judge, if ever there was one, of political principles, and who was far from being partial to dissenters, candidly confesses that to them we are indebted for the preservation of liberty.

The religious opinions of dissenters are so various, that there is perhaps no point in which they are agreed, except in asserting the rights of conscience against all human control and authority. From the time of Queen Elizabeth, under whom they began to make their appearance, their views of religious liberty have gradually extended, commencing at first with a disapprobation of certain rites and ceremonies, the remains of papal superstition. Their total separation from the church did not take place for more than a century after; till, despairing of seeing it erected on a comprehensive plan, and being moreover persecuted for their difference of sentiment, they were compelled at last, reluctantly to withdraw. Having been thus directed by a train of events into the right path, they pushed their principles to their legitimate consequences, and began to discern the impropriety of all religious establishments whatever, a sentiment in which they are now nearly united. On this very account, however, of all men they are least likely to disturb the peace of society; for they claim no other liberty than what they wish the whole human race to possess, that

of deciding on every question where conscience is concerned. It is sufferance they plead for, not establishment; protection, not splendour. A disposition to impose their religion on others cannot be suspected in men, whose distinguishing religious tenet, is the disavowal of all human authority.

Their opinion respecting establishments is founded upon reasons which appear to them weighty and solid. They have remarked, that in the three first and purest ages of religion, the church was a stranger to any alliance with temporal powers; that far from needing their aid, Christianity never flourished so much as while they were combined to suppress it; and that the protection of Constantine, though well intended, diminished its purity more than it added to its splendour.

The only pretence for uniting Christianity with civil government, is the support it yields to the peace and good order of society. But this benefit will be derived from it, at least in as great a degree, without an establishment as with it. Religion, if it has any power, operates on the *conscience* of men. Resting solely on the belief of invisible realities, and having for its object the good and evil of eternity, it can derive no additional weight or solemnity from human sanctions; but will appear to the most advantage upon hallowed ground, remote from the noise and tumults of worldly policy. Can it be imagined that a Dissenter, who believes in divine revelation, does not feel the same moral restraints, as if he had received his religion from the hands of parliament? Human laws may debase Christianity, but can never improve it; and being able to add nothing to its evidence, they can add nothing to its force.

Happy had it been, however, had civil establishments of religion been *useless* only, instead of being productive of the greatest evils. But when Christianity is established by law, it is requisite to give the preference

to some particular system : and as the magistrate is no better judge of religion than others, the chances are as great of his lending his sanction to the false as to the true. Splendour and emolument must likewise be in some degree attached to the national church ; which are a strong inducement to its ministers to defend it, be it ever so remote from the truth. Thus error becomes permanent, and that set of opinions which happens to prevail when the establishment is formed, continues, in spite of superior light and improvement, to be handed down without alteration from age to age. Hence the disagreement between the public creed of the church and the private sentiments of its ministers ; an evil growing out of the very nature of an hierarchy, and not likely to be remedied before it brings the clerical character into the utmost contempt. Hence the rapid spread of infidelity in various parts of Europe ; a natural and never-failing consequence of the corrupt alliance between church and state. Wherever we turn our eyes, we shall perceive the depression of religion is in proportion to the elevation of the hierarchy. In France, where the establishment had attained the utmost splendour, piety had utterly decayed ; in England, where the hierarchy is less splendid, more remains of the latter ; and in Scotland, whose national church is one of the poorest in the world, a greater sense of religion appears among the inhabitants, than in either of the former. It must likewise be plain to every observer, that piety flourishes much more among Dissenters, than among the members of any establishment whatever. This progress of things is so natural, that nothing seems wanting in any country, to render the thinking part of the people infidels, but a splendid establishment. It will always ultimately debase the clerical character, and perpetuate, both in discipline and doctrine, every error and abuse.

Turn a Christian society into an established church, and it is no longer a voluntary assembly for the worship of God ; it is a powerful corporation, full of such sentiments and passions as usually distinguish those bodies ; a dread of innovation, an attachment to abuses, a propensity to tyranny and oppression. Hence the convulsions that accompany religious reform, where the truth of the opinions in question is little regarded, amidst the alarm that is felt for the splendour, opulence, and power, which they are the means of supporting. To this alliance of Christianity with civil power, it is owing that ecclesiastical history presents a chaos of crimes ; and that the progress of religious opinions, which left to itself had been calm and silent, may be traced in blood.

Among the evils attending the alliance of Church and State, it is not the least, that it begets a notion of their interests having some kind of inseparable though mysterious connexion ; so that they who are dissatisfied with the one, must be enemies to the other. Our very language is tinctured with this delusion, in which Church and King are blended together with an arrogance that seems copied from Cardinal Wolsey's *Ego et rex meus*, I and my King ; as if the establishment were of more consequence than the sovereign who represents the collective majesty of the state. Let the interference of civil power be withdrawn, and the animosity of sects will subside for want of materials to inflame it, nor will any man suspect his neighbour for being of a different religion, more than for being of a different complexion from himself. The practice of toleration, it is true, has much abated the violence of those convulsions which, for more than a century from the beginning of the Reformation, shook Europe to its base ; but the source and spring of intolerance is by no means exhausted. The steam from that infernal

will issue through the crevices, until they are filled up with the *ruins* of all human establishments.

The alliance between Church and State is, in a *political point of view*, extremely suspicious, and much better fitted to the genius of an arbitrary than a free government. To the former it may yield a powerful support; to the latter it must ever prove dangerous. The spiritual submission it exacts, is unfavourable to mental vigour, and prepares the way for a servile acquiescence in the encroachments of civil authority. This is so correspondent with *facts*, that the epithet high church, when applied to politics, is familiarly used in our language to convey the notion of arbitrary maxims of government.

As far as submission to civil magistrates is a branch of moral virtue, Christianity will, under every form, be sure to enforce it; for among the various sects and parties into which its profession is divided, there subsists an entire agreement respecting the moral duties it prescribes. To select, therefore, and endow a *particular order* of clergy to teach the duties of submission, is useless, as a means to secure the peace of a society, though well fitted to produce a slavish subjection. Ministers of that description, considering themselves as allies of the state, yet having no civil department, will be disposed on all occasions to strike in with the current of the court; nor are they likely to confine the obligation to obedience within any just and reasonable bounds. They will insensibly become an army of spiritual janizaries. Depending, as they every where must, upon the Sovereign, his prerogative can never be exalted too high for their emolument, nor can any better instruments be contrived for the accomplishment of arbitrary designs. Their compact and united form, composing a chain of various links which hangs suspended from the throne, admirably fits them for

conveying the impression that may soothe, inflame, or mislead the people.

These are the evils which, in my opinion, attach to civil establishments of Christianity. They are indeed often mitigated by the virtue of their members, and among the English clergy in particular, as splendid examples of virtue and talents might be produced, as any which the annals of human nature can afford; but in all our reasonings concerning *men*, we must lay it down as a maxim, that the greater part are moulded by circumstances. If we wish to see the *true spirit* of an hierarchy, we have only to attend to the conduct of what is usually termed the high church party.

While they had sufficient influence with the legislature, they impelled it to persecute; and now that a more enlightened spirit has brought that expedient into disgrace, they turn to the people, and endeavour to inflame their minds by the arts of calumny and detraction. When the Dissenters applied for the repeal of the corporation and test acts, an alarm was spread of the church being in danger, and their claim was defeated. From the late opposition of the Bishops to the repeal of the penal statutes, we learn that they have lost the power rather than the inclination to persecute, or they would be happy to abolish the monuments of a spirit they ceased to approve. The nonsense and absurdity comprised in that part of our laws would move laughter in a company of peasants; but nothing is thought mean or contemptible which is capable of being forged into a weapon of hostility against Dissenters. To perpetuate laws which there is no intention to execute, is certainly the way to bring law into contempt; but the truth is, that unwilling to relinquish the right of persecution, though they have no immediate opportunity of exerting it, they retain these statutes as a

in reserve, ready to be brought into the field on the first occasion that shall offer.

The prejudice entertained against us, is not the work of a day, but the accumulation of ages, flowing from the fixed antipathy of a numerous and powerful order of men, distributed through all the classes of society ; nor is it easy to conceive to what a pitch popular resentment may be inflamed by artful management and contrivance. Our situation in this respect bears a near resemblance to that of primitive Christians, against whom, though in themselves the most inoffensive of mankind, the malice of the populace was directed, to a still greater degree, by similar arts, and upon similar principles. The clamour of the fanatic rabble, the devout execration of Dissenters, will remind the reader of ecclesiastical history of the excesses of pagan ferocity, when the people, instigated by their priests, were wont to exclaim, *christianos ad leones*. There is the less hope of this animosity being allayed, from its having arisen from *permanent causes*. That Christianity is a simple institution, unallied to worldly power ; that a church is a voluntary society, invested with a right to choose its own officers, and acknowledging no head but Jesus Christ ; that ministers are brethren, whose emolument should be confined to the voluntary contributions of the people ; are maxims drawn from so high an authority, that it may well be apprehended that the church is doomed to vanish before them. Under these circumstances, whatever portion of talents or of worth Dissenters may possess, serves only to render them more hated, because more formidable. Had they merely revelled with the wanton, and drunk with the drunken ; had they been clothed with curses, they might have been honoured and esteemed notwithstanding, as true sons of the church ; but their dissent is a crime too indelible in the eyes of

their enemies for any virtue to alleviate, or any merit to efface.

Till the test business was agitated, however, we were not aware of our labouring under such a weight of prejudice. Confiding in the mildness of the times, and conscious that every trace of resentment was vanished from our own breasts, we fondly imagined that those of Churchmen were equally replete with sentiments of generosity and candour. We accordingly ventured on a renewal of our claims as men, and as citizens; but had not proceeded far, before we were assailed with the bitterest reproaches. The innocent design of relieving ourselves from a disgraceful proscription, was construed by our enemies into an attack on the church and state. Their opposition was both more violent and more formidable than was expected. They let us see, that however languidly the flame of their devotion may burn, that of resentment and party spirit, like vestal fire, must never be extinguished in their temples. Calumnies continued to be propagated, till they produced the riots at Birmingham, that ever memorable æra in the annals of bigotry and fanaticism, when Europe beheld, with astonishment and regret, the outrage sustained by philosophy in the most enlightened of countries, and in the first of her sons! When we hear such excesses as these justified and applauded, we seem to be falling back apace into the darkness of the middle ages.

The connexion between civil and religious liberty is too intimate to make it surprising, that they who are attached to the one, should be friendly to the other. The Dissenters have accordingly seldom failed to lend their support to men, who seemed likely to restore the vigour of a sinking constitution. Parliamentary reform has been cherished by them with an ardour equal to its importance. This part of their character inflames op-

position still farther ; and affords a pretext to their enemies for overwhelming the cause of liberty under an obnoxious name. The reproach on this head, however, is felt as an honour, when it appears by their conduct that they despair of attacking liberty with success, while the reputation of Dissenters remains undiminished. The enmity of the vicious is the test of virtue.

Dissenters are reproached with the appellation of republicans ; but the truth of the charge has neither appeared from facts, or been supported by any reasonable evidence. Among them, as among other classes (and in no greater proportion) there are persons to be found, no doubt, who, without any hostility to the present government, prefer in theory a republican to a monarchical form ; a point on which the most enlightened men in all ages have entertained very different opinions. In a government like ours, consisting of three simple elements, as this variety of sentiment may naturally be expected to take place, so, if any predilection be felt toward one more than another, that partiality seems most commendable which inclines to the republican part. At most it is only the love of liberty to excess. The mixture of monarchy and nobility is chiefly of use as it gives regularity, order, and stability to popular freedom. Were we, however, without any proof, to admit that Dissenters are more tinctured with republican principles than others, it might be considered as the natural effect of the absurd conduct of the legislature. Exposed to pains and penalties, excluded from all offices of trust, proscribed by the spirit of the present reign, menaced and insulted wherever they appear, they must be more than men if they felt no resentment, or were passionately devoted to the ruling powers. To expect affection in return for injury, is to gather where they have not scattered, and reap where

they have not sown. The superstition of Dissenters is not so abject as to prompt them to worship the constitution through fear. Yet as they have not forgotten the benefits it imparted, and the protection it afforded till of late, they are too much its friends to flatter its defects, or defend its abuses. Their only wish is to see it reformed, and reduced to its original principles.

In recent displays of loyalty they must acknowledge themselves extremely defective. They have never plundered their neighbours to shew their attachment to the King; nor has their zeal for religion ever broke out into oaths and execrations. They have not proclaimed their respect for regular government by a breach of the laws; or attempted to maintain tranquillity by riots. These beautiful specimens of loyalty belong to the virtue and moderation of the high church party alone, with whose character they perfectly correspond.

In a scurrilous paper which has been lately circulated with malignant industry, the Dissenters at large, and Dr. Price in particular, are accused, with strange effrontery, of having involved us in the American war; when it is well known they ever stood aloof from that scene of guilt and blood.

Had their remonstrances been regarded, the calamities of that war had never been incurred; but what is of more consequence in the estimation of anonymous scribblers, there would have remained one lie less to swell the catalogue of their falsehoods.

From the joy which Dissenters have expressed at the French revolution, it has been most absurdly inferred, that they wish for a similar event in England; without considering that such a conclusion is a libel on the British constitution, as it must proceed on a supposition that our government is as despotic as the ancient monarchy of France. To imagine the feelings must be

the same, when the objects are so different, shows a most lamentable degree of malignity and folly.

Encompassed as Dissenters are by calumny and reproach, they have still the satisfaction to reflect, that these have usually been the lot of distinguished virtue ; and that in the corrupt state of men's interests and passions, the unpopularity of a cause is rather a presumption of its excellence.

They will be still more happy if the frowns of the world should be the means of reviving that spirit of evangelical piety, which once distinguished them so highly. Content if they can gain protection, without being so romantic as to aspire to praise, they will continue firm, I doubt not, in those principles which they have hitherto acted on, unseduced by rewards, and unshaken by dangers. From the passions of their enemies, they will appeal to the judgment of posterity ; —a more impartial tribunal. Above all, they will calmly await the decision of the Great Judge, before whom both they and their enemies must appear, and the springs and sources of their mutual animosity be laid open ; when the clouds of misrepresentation being scattered, it will be seen they are a virtuous and oppressed people, who are treading, though with unequal steps, in the path of those illustrious prophets, apostles, and martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy. In the mean time they are far from envying the popularity and applause which may be acquired in a contrary course ; esteeming the reproaches of freedom above the splendours of servitude.

SECTION VI.

ON THE CAUSES OF THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS.

WE have arrived, it is a melancholy truth which can no longer be concealed, we have at length arrived at that crisis, when nothing but speedy and effectual reform can save us from ruin. An amendment in the representation is wanted, as well to secure the liberty we already possess, as to open the way for the removal of those abuses which pervade every branch of the administration. The accumulation of debt and taxes, to a degree unexampled in any other age or country, has so augmented the influence of the crown, as to destroy the equipoise and balance of the constitution. The original design of the funding system which commenced in the reign of King William, was to give stability to the revolution, by engaging the monied interest to embark on its bottom. It immediately advanced the influence of the crown, which the Whigs then exalted as much as possible, as a countervail to the interest of the Pretender.

The mischief of this short-sighted policy cannot be better described than in the language of Bolingbroke. "Few men," says he, "at that time looked forward enough to foresee the consequences of the new constitution of the revenue, that was soon afterward formed; nor of the method of the funding system that immediately took place; which, absurd as they are, have con-

tinued since, till it has become scarcely possible to alter them. Few people, I say, foresaw how the multiplication of taxes, and the creation of funds would increase yearly the power of the crown, and bring our liberties, by a natural and necessary progression, into a more real, though less apparent danger, than they were in before the revolution: a due reflection on the experience of other ages and countries, would have pointed out national corruption as the natural and necessary consequence of investing the crown with the management of so vast a revenue; and also, the loss of liberty as the natural and necessary consequence of national corruption.”*

If there be any truth in these reflections, how much must our apprehensions be heightened by the prodigious augmentation of revenue and debt, since the time of George the First. What a harvest has been reaped from the seeds of corruption then sown!—The revenue is now upwards of seventeen millions; and though nine are employed to pay the interest of the national debt, this is small consolation, when we reflect that that debt is the remnant of wasteful, destructive wars, and that till there is a change in the system, we are continually liable to similar calamities. The multiplied channels through which seventeen millions of money must flow into the treasury, the legion of officers it creates, the patronage its expenditure on the several branches of the administration supplies, have rendered the influence of the crown nearly absolute and decisive. The control of parliament sinks under this pressure into formality: the balance of the different orders becomes a mere theory, which serves to impose upon ignorance, and varnish corruption. There is no power in the State that can act as a sufficient antagonist to the silent, irresistible force of royal patronage.

* Letter ii. on the Study of History.

The influence of the crown, by means of its revenue, is more dangerous than prerogative, in proportion as corruption operates after a more concealed manner than force. A violent act of prerogative is sensibly felt, and creates an alarm ; but it is the nature of corruption to lay apprehension asleep, and to effect its purposes while the forms of liberty remain undisturbed. The first employs force to enslave the people : the second employs the people to enslave themselves. The most determined enemy to freedom can wish for nothing more than the continuance of present abuses. While the semblance of representation can be maintained, while popular delusion can be kept up, he will spare the *extremities* of liberty ; he aims at a higher object, that of *striking at the heart*.

A fatal lethargy has long been spreading amongst us, attended, as is natural, with a prevailing disposition both in and out of parliament, to treat plans of reform with contempt. After the accession, peace and pension bills were frequently passed by the Commons, though rejected by the Lords : nothing of that nature is now ever attempted. A standing army in time of peace was a subject of frequent complaint, and is expressly provided against by the bill of rights : it is now become a part of the constitution ; for though the nominal direction be placed in parliament, the mutiny bill passes as a matter of course, the forces are never disbanded ; the more completely to detach them from the community, barracks are erected ; and martial law is established in its utmost severity. If freedom can survive this expedient, copied from the practice of foreign despots, it will be an instance of unexampled good fortune. Mr. Hume terms it a mortal distemper in the British constitution, of which it must *inevitably* perish.

To whatever cause it be owing, it is certain the measures of administration have, during the present

reign, leaned strongly towards arbitrary power. The decision on the Middlesex election was a blow aimed at the vitals of the constitution. Before the people had time to recover from their panic, they were plunged into the American war—a war of pride and ambition, and ending in humiliation and disgrace. The spirit of the government is so well understood, that the most violent even of the clergy, are content to drop their animosity, to turn their affections into a new channel, and to devote to the house of Hanover, the flattery and the zeal by which they ruined the race of Stuart. There cannot be a clearer symptom of the decay of liberty than the dread of speculative opinions; which is at present carried to a length in this nation that can scarcely be exceeded. Englishmen were accustomed till of late, to make political speculation the amusement of leisure, and the employment of genius;—they are now taught to fear it more than death. Under the torpid touch of despotism, the patriotic spirit has shrunk into a narrow compass; confined to gaze with admiration on the proceedings of parliament, and listen to the oracles of the minister with silent acquiescence, and pious awe. Abuses are sacred, and the pool of corruption must putrify in peace. Persons who a few years back were clamorous for reform, are making atonement for having been betrayed into any appearance of virtue, by a quick return to their natural character. Is not the kingdom peopled with spies and informers?—Are not inquisitorial tribunals erected in every corner of the land? A stranger, who beholding a whole nation filled with alarm, should inquire the cause of the commotion, would be a little surprised on being informed, that instead of any appearance of insurrection, or plots, a pamphlet had only been published. In a government upheld by so immense a revenue, and boasting a constitution declared to be the

envy of the world, this abject distrust of its own power, is more than a million lectures on corruptions and abuses. The wisdom of ages, the master-piece of human policy, complete in all its parts, and that needs no reformation, can hardly support itself against a sixpenny pamphlet, devoid, it is said, of truth or ability ! To require sycophants to blush, is exacting too great a departure from the decorum of their character ; but common sense might be expected to remain, after shame is extinguished.

Whoever seriously contemplates the present infatuation of the people, and the character of the leaders, will be tempted to predict the speedy downfall of liberty. They cherish the forms, while they repress the spirit of the constitution ; they persecute freedom and adorn its sepulchre. When corruption has struck its roots so deep, it may be doubted whether even the liberty of the press be not of more detriment than advantage. The prints which are the common sources of information, are replete with falsehood ; virtue is calumniated ; and scarcely any characters safe from their blast, except the advocates of corruption. The greater part, no doubt, are in the pay of ministry, or their adherents. Thus delusion spreads, and the people are instructed to confound anarchy with reform, their friends with their oppressors.

Who can hear without indignant contempt, the ministers' annual eulogium on the English constitution. Is the parliament so ignorant then, that it needs to go to school every session to learn those elements of political knowledge which every Briton understands ? Or is the nature of the British constitution a secret in the breast of the ministry to be opened with the budget ? Indisputable excellence wants no encomium ; but this flattery is intended to bury, in an admiration of its merit, all remembrance of its defects. Whatever re-

mains of beauty or vigour it possesses, are held in no estimation but as they produce an acquiescence in abuses. It is its imperfections only ministers admire; its corruptions that solace them. The topics of their encomium are as absurd as the purpose is infamous. The flourishing state of trade and manufactures is displayed in proof of the unequalled excellence of the British constitution, without reflecting that a temporary decay will support with equal force an opposite conclusion. For if we owe our present prosperity to the nature of the government, our recent calamities must be traced to the same source, and that constitution which is now affirmed to be the best, must be allowed, during the American war, to have been the worst. That there is a connexion between commercial prosperity and the nature of a government must be admitted; but its operation is gradual and slow, not felt from year to year, but to be traced by the comparison of one age and country with another. But allowing that our wealth may increase along with the increase of abuses, the nation we hope is not so sordid as to look upon wealth as the supreme good, however well that idea may correspond with the views of a ministry, who seem determined to leave us no other. Freedom, as it animates industry by securing its rewards, opens a path to wealth; but if that wealth be suffered to debase a people, and render them venal and dependant, it will silently conduct them back again to misery and depression. Rome was never more opulent than on the eve of departing liberty. Her vast wealth was a sediment that remained on the reflux of the tide. It is quite unnecessary to remind the reader how all this at present is reversed, and that the unbounded prodigality of Mr. Pitt and his successors, in the conduct of the war, which the corruption of parliament enabled them to maintain, has plunged the nation into the deepest abyss of poverty and distress.

It is singular enough, but I hope not ominous, that the flattery bestowed by the poets of antiquity on the ruling powers, resembles in every thing but its elegance, the adulation of modern sycophants. The extent of empire, the improvement of arts, the diffusion of opulence and splendour, are the topics with which Horace adorned the praises of Augustus : but the penetration of Tacitus develops amidst these flattering appearances, the seeds of ruin. The florid bloom but ill concealed that fatal malady which preyed upon the vitals.

Between the period of national honour and complete degeneracy, there is usually an interval of national vanity, during which, examples of virtue are recounted and admired, without being imitated. The Romans were never more proud of their ancestors than when they ceased to resemble them. From being the freest and most high-spirited people in the world, they suddenly fell into the tamest and most abject submission. Let not the name of Britons, my countrymen, too much elate you ; nor ever think yourselves safe, while you abate one jot of that holy jealousy by which your liberties have been hitherto secured. The richer the inheritance bequeathed you, the more it merits your care for its preservation. The possession must be continued by that spirit with which it was at first acquired ; and as it was gained by vigilance, it will be lost by supineness. A degenerate race repose on the merit of their forefathers ; the virtuous create a fund of their own. The former look back upon their ancestors to hide their shame ; the latter look forward to posterity to levy a tribute of admiration. In vain will you confide in the forms of a free constitution. Unless you reanimate those forms with fresh vigour, they will be melancholy memorials of what you once were, and haunt you with the shade of departed liberty. A silent stream of corruption poured over the whole land, has

tainted every branch of the administration with decay. On your temperate, but manly exertions, depend the happiness and freedom of the latest posterity. That assembly which sits by right of representation, will be little inclined to oppose your will, expressed in a firm, decisive manner. You may be deafened by clamour, misled by sophistry, or weakened by division; but you cannot be despised with impunity. A vindictive ministry may hang the terrors of criminal prosecution over the heads of a few with success; but at their peril will they attempt to intimidate a nation. The trick of associations, of pretended plots, and silent insurrections, will oppose a feeble barrier to the impression of the popular mind.

The theory of the constitution in the most important particulars is a satire on the practice. The theory provides the responsibility of ministers as a check to the execution of ill designs; but in reality we behold the basest of the tribe retreat from the ruin of their country, loaded with honours and with spoils. Theory tells us the parliament is free and independent; experience will correct the mistake by shewing its subservience to the crown. We learn from the first, that the legislature is chosen by the unbiassed voice of all who can be supposed to have a will of their own; we learn from the last, the pretended electors are but a handful of the people, who are never less at their own disposal than in the business of election. The theory holds out equal benefits to all, and equal liberty, without any other discrimination, than that of a good and bad subject; its practice brands with proscription and disgrace a numerous class of inhabitants on account of their religion. In theory, the several orders of the state are a check on each other; but corruption has oiled the wheels of that machinery, harmonized its motions, and enabled it to bear with united pressure on the happiness of the people.

The principal remedy for the diseases of the state is undoubtedly a reform in parliament ; from which, as a central point, inferior improvements may issue ; but as I have already treated on that subject at large, I shall not insist on it here. I cannot close this pamphlet, however, without adverting for a moment to a few of the principal objects which well merit the attention of the legislature.

On the abuses in the church, it is to little purpose to expatiate, as they are too numerous to be detailed, and too inveterate to be corrected. Unless it be a maxim that honesty will endanger her existence, her creeds ought in all reason to correspond with the sentiments of her members. The world, it is to be feared, will be little edified by the example of a church, which in compelling its ministers to subscribe opinions that few of them believe, is a discipline of fraud. Nor is the collection of tithes calculated to soften the odium. As a mode of union with the parishioners, they are fruitful of contention ; as a restraint on the improvement of land, impolitic and oppressive ; as a remnant of the Jewish law, superstitious and absurd. True magnanimity would instruct the clergy to recede from a claim which they will probably be compelled shortly to relinquish. But no reform, it seems, must take place in the church any more than in the state, that its corruptions may keep pace with the progress of its ally.

The condition of the poor in this country calls for compassion and redress. Many of them, through the want of mental improvement, are sunk almost beneath the level of humanity ; and their hard-earned pittance is so diminished by taxes, that it is with the utmost difficulty they can nourish their children, and utterly impossible to afford them education. The poor laws enacted for their relief, by confining their industry to a particular spot, and denying them the privilege of residing where they may exert it to the greatest advan-

tage, are an accumulated oppression. Were industry allowed to find its level, were the poor laws abolished, and a small proportion of that expense which swells the tide of corruption, the splendours of the great, and the miseries of war, bestowed on the instruction of the common people, the happy effects would descend to the remotest posterity, and open a prospect which humanity might delight to anticipate. In England we have been adding wheel to wheel, and spring to spring, till we have rendered the machine of government far too complicated; forgetting in the midst of wars, negotiations and factious disputes, that the true end of civil polity is the happiness of the people. We have listened to every breeze that moves along the surface of Europe, and descried danger from afar; while deaf to the complaints of the poor, we have beheld ignorance, wretchedness, and barbarity multiply at home, without the smallest regard. Is it possible to behold with patience the numberless tribe of placemen, pensioners and sycophants, who are enriched at the public expense; a noxious spawn engendered by the corruptions of government, and nourished by the diseases? Were our immense revenue conducive to the maintenance of royal dignity, or proportioned to the exigencies of the state, it would be borne with pleasure; but at present, it bids fair to be the purchase of our servitude.

Our laws, in order to become a proper rule of civil life, much want revision and amendment. They are moreover never promulgated. For this omission, Judge Blackstone assigns a very curious reason. "That being enacted by our representatives, every man is supposed in the eye of the law, to be present in the legislature." It would be an improvement on this delegated knowledge of the law, if the penalty were also delegated; and criminals punished by representation. The laws in their present state, are so piled into

volumes, encumbered with precedents, and perplexed with intricacies, that they are often rather a snare than a guide, and are a fruitful source of the injustice they are intended to prevent. The expense is as formidable as the penalty; nor is it to any purpose to say they are the same to the poor as to the rich, while by their delay, expense and perplexity, they are placed on an eminence, which opulence only can ascend. The commendation bestowed by foreigners so liberally on English jurisprudence was never meant to be extended to our municipal code, which is confused, perplexed, and sanguinary in the extreme; but to the trial by jury, and the dignified impartiality which marks the conduct of judges. For want of gradual improvements, to enable it to keep pace with the progress of society, the most useful operations of law are clouded by fictions.*

These are a few only of the maladies which indicate a bad habit of the political body: nor can a true estimate be made of our situation so much by adverting to *particular evils*, as by an attention to the general aspect of affairs. The present crisis is, in my apprehension, the fullest of terror and of danger we have ever experienced. In the extension of excise laws, in the erection of barracks, in the determined adherence to abuses displayed by parliament, in the desertion of pretended patriots, the spread of arbitrary principles, the tame, subdued spirit of the nation, we behold the seeds of political ruin quickening into life. The *securities* of liberty, as was long since remarked by Dr. Price, have given way; and what remains is little more than an *indulgence* which cannot continue long, when it ceases to be cherished in the affections of the people. The little of public virtue that still subsists, is no match for disciplined armies of corruption. The people are perishing for lack of knowledge. Disquieted by imaginary alarms, insensible to real danger that

* See an excellent publication on this subject, entitled, "Juridical Essays," by Mr. Randall.